

Elley Orrum
Queen of the Comstock

SWIFT PAINE

Robert L. Bell

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EILLEY ORRUM

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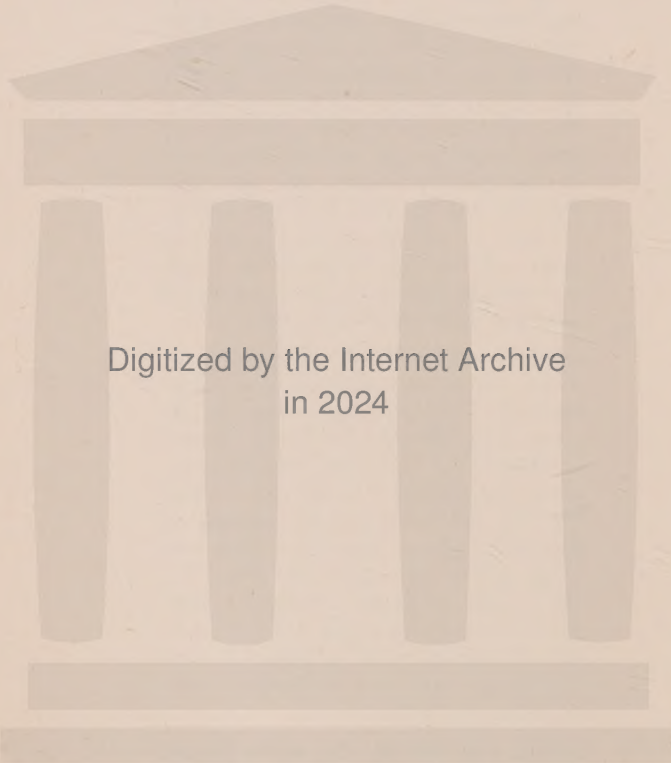
by

SWIFT PAINE

Eilley Orrum was as strange as her name; one of these half-daft children of the Great God Eccentrex who so often make history. She was born in Scotland, but one day while the oldsters were at church she listened to the persuasion of a proselyting Mormon and when church was out she told her parents she was going to America. She did. Once here, her way lay west, and if she married a couple of husbands during the next few years and lost them in her stride it was not through flippancy but because destiny beckoned—and probably winked.

For by now Eilley Orrum had begun to see visions. On west to Nevada she went garnering a third husband and peering into her crystal globe the while. This husband proved permanent and the crystal mirrored something that glimmered white and magical. She and Sandy the husband camped; so did many another. And where Eilley was, there was the great Comstock Silver Lode. Then wealth, sudden and fabulous; an order for a satrap's palace, and, while the mansion was building, a trip to England to meet the Queen. Back home to Nevada to rule, to grieve, to fight. . . .

Thunder and lightning were in this amazing woman, but pity and farce and heartbreak as well. To try to describe her here is to insult the superb portrayal by Mr. Paine.



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EILLEY ORRUM

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Queen of the Comstock

By SWIFT PAINE



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To D. B.
AND DESTINY

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CHARACTERS

John W. Mackay—big bonanza king, but once a mucker for all that.

Mrs. Mackay—who kept a good boarding-house before she met the kings and queens.

James Graham Fair—bonanza king, who had a fine nose for ore.

Mrs. Fair—née one of the Rooneys.

James Clair Flood—another bonanza king, who tended his own bar in the Auction Saloon.

William S. O'Brien—his partner in bar and bonanza too.

United States Senator William Sharon—King of the Comstock, Silver Tycoon.

Sarah Althea Hill—Sharon's rose.

Mrs. William Sharon (indeed his lawful wedded wife)—née Maria Ann Malloy.

Adolph Sutro—that "damned old Assyrian carpet-bagger."

William Ralston—president of the Bank of California.

Major Ferrend—who bore forty-nine body scars.

Mrs. Hawkins—who did not like brothels and said so.

Julia Bulette—harlot nevertheless, of D Street, Virginia City.

Edward Hunter—a dutiful bishop who had many wives.

EILLEY ORRUM

Maggie, Susan and Tinie—this romantic bishop's romantic nieces.

Mrs. Dale—who went for Mr. Wilcoxen's wife.

Stephen J. Field—Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Judge David S. Terry—who threatened to kill him.

Jean Marie à Villain, known as John Millain—a murderer in his own right, but called by some "the deliverer."

Philip Hopkins—who murdered his red-haired wife and seven children.

Old Chips—who never gave any attention to his ablutionary duties.

Henry P. (Old Pancake) Comstock—who gave his name to the lode.

Snowshoe Thompson—who ran across the mountains in mid-winter.

John P. Jones of Trinity—the Nevada commoner, United States Senator.

Mrs. Killigrew—a public-spirited lady of fashion.

Mammy Pleasaunce—a colored lady who gave charms.

A mahalie—a red lady who wanted to jump.

Mademoiselle Marie Zoe—lady champion of the broadsword.

Susie—who was hungry at the hanging.

The Montgomery Queen—who brought an Abyssinian ibex to the desert.

Elder Orson Hyde—the Olive Branch of Israel.

With a large cast of supers including Washoes, Piutes, Chinamen, Queen Victoria, loose ladies, the Empress Eugénie, Mrs. George M. Pullman, a Mr. Mark Twain, Mr. Gagelin (couturier), infants, King

CHARACTERS

Victor Emmanuel, Henry Adams, Johnny Tuers, Old Virginia, Episcopalians, Champions of the Red Cross, Byron Bonaparte Brodt, Lucky Baldwin, Horace Greeley, bears, goldfish, Governor and Mrs. Leland Stanford, Baron Rothschild, cardinals, Mr. Zenavavitch, Elder John McAuley from Edinburgh, camels, governors, Knight Templars, crowds of five thousand men, women and children, and young Mr. Bryan who was going to do great things about silver.

Sandy Bowers—a good teamster, a reticent husband, but a sure fulfillment of a great hope—he made a million dollars a year.

John Jasper Bowers—the small fulfillment of another great hope.

Theresa Fortunatus Bowers—“she has refreshed my spirit”—another hope.

Margaret Persia Bowers—a hopeless and incomprehensible child.

Betsy Livingstone—one of the family, and yet one with whom there was no grandness.

Louisa Ellis—a faithful friend.

And EILLEY ORRUM—her predominating passion was that Nature should be regular—with the aid of Destiny and a pure purpose, she achieved three husbands, discovered the great Comstock silver lode, toured Europe to mingle with the Crowned Heads, built the finest mansion between St. Louis and San Francisco, entertained the thousands upon her country estate, predicted the big bonanza, confounded her enemies, and because she was indeed the daughter of kings, was fain to be a true queen to the very end.

EILLEY ORRUM

BOOK ONE

SAINTS

EILLEY ORRUM

CHAPTER ONE

1

AT FIFTEEN Eilley Orrum, daughter of kings, wanted the whole world. The line of indefinite kings reached to the beginning of time in the tales of those Scottish highlands. The just as indefinite world stretched to the end of space. At some farthest edge she would live out the splendor of a new tale. Before the dawn of May Day, 1842, she stole out on the moor of her fathers to perform the exciting little rites that would bring her luck. From childhood she had been steeped in the rich lore of ancestral kings, prophets and lesser folk, and had acquired, from all who would tell, the various royal and ancient intuitive gifts of the highlanders. She would be back, unmissed, in time to milk the cow, gather the eggs, feed the pigs and the hens, do the chores from which even the Sabbath gave her no

rest. Her short body and her quick black eyes tingled with the surprising alertness of that early magic hour and her exalted purpose.

Higher in the glen where the mist rested beneath the pale sky, she could cup in her hand the first May dew to fling for luck over her cool shoulder, to rub for beauty into her glowing face. If she could grasp a snail by the horns before it withdrew its head and place it on the jagged slate which she carried under her arm, it would form the initials of her destined husband, as unlike her father as possible, tall, important, cheerily doing her slightest bidding. At the border of the mist her hand swooped down on a moving snail, but before she could touch its horns, its head vanished. She tried another and another, but she could only make them exercise their necks. No matter. She put a closed snail on the slate where, awakening to desperate escape, it left silvery curving tracks that might be an S and a B or, perhaps, an E and an H. She would cherish those letters for ever. Fine, solid and smooth, her cheeks, her eyelids, her brows, her lips, and her black hair enjoyed the dew and the swift pressure of her fingers. Then she cast some drops over her left shoulder. Damp but satisfied with the romantic conviction that her beauty was permanently insured for a stalwart husband whose names began with an S and a B or an E and an H, she danced with exuberance, per-

haps a little heavily, back along the way she had come out.

“Dan is a lion’s whelp; he shall leap from Bashan,” her father had often read it from the Good Book, and the Scots, as the minister insisted and indeed all should know, were the tribe of Dan. Eilley loved the sound of words from the Good Book and from all old tales, Zedekiah, Jeremiah and Tea Tephi, Bruidi, Fergus and Heremon. For a daughter of such names the world must offer some dazzling kingdom remote from that Black Isle where the land lies day after day under the shadow of the sun. With the sure promise of a strong husband and a bonny first born, the whelp of a royal Scottish lion could leap with confidence. Her eldest sister, Betsy, was married to the Connon wheelwright, Jim Livingstone, with brows like feelers and a canny squint. Sometimes she would escape to his shop and sit brooding among the fellies and the strouters, the dowels and the naves. Ash as tough as whipcord for wheels for carts—a cart might take her to a ship, and a ship could sail anywhere—straight to an S. B. or an E. H., and then she would have her baby. Carts and ships be fruitful and multiply, be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth.

The Sabbath before she had gone with the Livingstones to a strange new meeting in Connon, and there had heard much of fruitfulness. These missionaries,

Betsy said, were Saints from America, but her mother, like the townsfolk, had set herself harshly against the Mormons. Were they not stealing people from the true kirk, and converting too many young girls? Eilley wondered why they should not convert young girls, and pondered on the pleasant importance of being converted in the very teeth of her mother's bitterness, for conversion might mystically lead to the fulfillment of her dreams. Betsy, Jim, and many of the younger folk had been much impressed by the holy earnestness of these Latter Day Saints. Her father and mother had been fruitful enough, but the earth beyond the sea must be barren waiting to be replenished with children far finer than her brothers and sisters, as fine as herself. Of the ten children, she, the sixth, might as easily have been the seventh—he had died. She would manage things better. She would have a seventh daughter, and never let her die, never. Stiff numbers like those were mysterious but fraught with good omen for the specially chosen. She would pretend that she was the seventh, aloof and superior, with second sight, blooming as the heather in a land of great mountains just wild enough for her to tame. The stately daughter of kings, and expectant mother of many, slid around the hedge into the byre and took down her milking pail and stool, but her mother had spied her.

“Eilley? Eilley? Where have you been now?” the

peevish greeting rose above the clattering confusion of kitchen and barnyard and the voices of younger children clamoring for food, but on this one morning Eilley was fortified above such pettishness.

"I've walked abroad on the moor," she announced with dignity; "it's May Day."

"May Day! It's the Sabbath, and not a chore started, high daylight and the children to wash. Did you milk the cow?"

"I'm milking now, mother."

Explaining, explaining, explaining! A cart and a ship could take her beyond explanations, beyond beds to make, floors to sweep, dishes to wash, wood to fetch, clothes to mend, potatoes to weed, to hoe, to dig, to peel and to boil—she hated potatoes. Every squeeze at the teats of the cow marked the rhythm of her thoughts. Would her mother let her go to the new meeting? Some day she would do what she would do and ask nobody. Some day, some day, to-morrow, to-morrow, to-day, to-day, to-day. With her mother, really a seventh child though not a seventh daughter, there was no grandness. No wonder she had warts and wrinkles, knobby knuckles, and hair like boiled kale. Inside at breakfast they brawled again. The younger children were ailing, and her mother, aggrieved, was determined to deprive herself of the benefits of the preaching to stay with them.

"I'll stay with the ailing bairns, mother," Eilley offered graciously, pursuing her plan with cunning; "I've no need of attending the kirk, for I'm going to the new meeting this afternoon."

"Mormons! Raiders! They're raiding the kirk with their converting, raiding the countryside. I'll have them convert no child of mine."

"Betsy goes."

"Betsy's under her own roof and has her man to look out for her. As long as you stay under this roof you'll stay with the true kirk."

At that Eilley, with the obstinate will of one unquestionably in the right, announced that if she could not go to the new meeting of her choice, she would go to no kirk at all. The upshot was that the desolate little group hurried off without her to the village church which had made her mother's cruel harsh life. Then resentful, desolate herself, turning over in her thought fierce plans for getting around her mother, thinking of no feasible way, determined to find one, she settled by the empty hearth to hear Hugh, Davie and Jeanie repeat with dutiful monotony the catechism of the true faith.

2

Scarcely had they departed, however, before strange footsteps from another direction aroused her. So

vivid were her dreaming hopes of the morning that she was but little astonished to see from the front window a striding man, tallish, with a chin beard, one of those very Mormons from the new meeting which had been forbidden her, an elder who had spoken to her the Sunday before. A Saint was coming to see her, Eilley Orrum, with two books that foretold wisdom and mystery under his arm. While her charges ran out by the rear, she stepped to the door and threw it open, glad but on the defensive too. Pausing bashfully, she and the Saint both laughed, he with a short serious bleat. From the watery light in his eye she could tell that there were important things on his mind. He had come to ask her to the meeting that afternoon, Mrs. Livingstone had suggested it, and, passing by, he had hoped to see her before she set out for her own church. Eilley yearned. Why should she not find out now while her mother was away whether she wanted to be converted. The children, peering with eyes like scared animals around the corner of the cot but curious with the memory of their mother's maledictions fresh in mind, could play outside.

"I can't come to the meeting," she told him bluntly, "but you might talk to me now."

"I will read you from the Book," the Saint said without urging, "and I will read you something that maybe you have never understood." The pages rustled, and, "The hand of the Lord . . ." he began cheerfully,

“set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones . . . very many in the open valley . . . very dry.”

It was the best possible beginning, for Eilley liked bones. Once she had sat enthralled when her father had read that chapter aloud. The Saint, putting his new interpretation on the passage, jumped at the phrases and caught them as if they were rabbits. “A noise . . . a shaking . . . the bones came together . . . the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above.” It would be fine to order bones to do that and watch them obey, quivering, pulling themselves together, taking on new shape. With such submissive spirits she could fashion the whole life of a valley no matter how dry. She waited for the meaning to please her still more while she reveled in the swing of the Scriptural sounds. “Take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah . . . then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph . . . And join them one to another into one stick . . . I will take the children of Israel . . . and bring them into their own land . . . one nation in the land upon the mountains.” He closed that first Book, and began to open her understanding. “Dan shall leap from Bashan,” he reminded her.

“I was thinking that only this morning,” she said, startled, impressed, delighted to show her own ready knowledge. She knew how he would continue.

“Dan has already leaped from Bashan to Scotland, and now the Scots must go on first as always to mark out and prepare the way. The two sticks must be united.”

“Go where? Be united how?” Eilley was interested.

“I’ll show you.” His mouth was tight lipped for a moment while he opened his other book, the Book of Mormon he explained, and Eilley recaptured her thoughts of that morning in the dew. She, she must leap. It was her destiny. As he began to read some more, she heard first only the names, some old, some strange, and the strange ones she liked in her mind as much as she liked Bruidi, Fergus, and Eilley Orrum. “Manassah, Laman, Lemuel . . . Mahonri, Moriancumr, Lehi,” he ran over them too quickly it seemed, though he was really slow. Backward and forward he turned the pages, straining to persuade her that their eloquence was inspired. “And I also saw gold and silver and silks and scarlet,” he read, “and fine twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing: and I saw many harlots . . .”

He quickly sought another passage. Some day she, Eilley Orrum, would have gowns and curtains of gold and scarlet, a whole silver service of her own, statues, fountains, goldfish in great pools, thousands and thousands of goldfish, a mansion, a palace. Harlots too, whatever they were . . . But he had found the other

passage. "Because my words shall hiss forth, many of the Gentiles shall say, a bible, a bible, we have got a bible, and there cannot be any more bibles . . . O fools . . . because that I have spoken one word, ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another, for my work is not yet finished, neither shall it be until the end of man." Reasonable enough. She herself would like to prophesy, have people come to her, lean on her words, while she sat back in her chair made like a throne. In her mind at once arose the picture of her skirt and all her petticoats crinkling about the legs of this chair bearing up her prophetic fire.

From Jerusalem to the Red Sea, he explained, the Lamanites and the Nephites went eastward across tawny Arabia to the Persian Gulf where they built a ship and sailed across the great waters to South America. The Lamanites, a loathsome and benighted race cursed with dark skins, were jealous of the Nephites, a white and delightful people. Yet when the Savior appeared to the more righteous of them after His resurrection, these Nephites were annihilated at Cumorah. The Saint licked his lips as he recounted it. An awful tempest raged for three hours. The lightning's fiery falchion smote. Mountains disappeared, sunken or swept away. Great boulders hurtled through the air as if thrown by a Titan's hands. Chasms opened engulfing cities with their living millions. At all this destruction the Saint's

beard, his eyes, and his thin crooked fingers fairly shook. Now it was as if he had caught and killed the very phrases, crunched them, and was tearing them apart. Eilley sat there feeding on the excitement, the crashing conflict, the passion with which he presented it.

"At that day," he declared, "shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people . . . The Indians themselves, though cursed of God, shall yet be reclaimed, and become white and delightful as of yore." Eilley pictured herself, white and delightful, as queen among the Indians, while he went on about unearthed skeletons, arrow-heads, mounds, and characters drawn on rocks. Some of the Indians, he said, were tattooed with Hebrew characters and some with the characters of Moroni. Yes, she would be queen and ascend her throne, but she would not be in too much hurry to turn them white, because it would be more fitting for one of her position to keep them expectant. Then she caught her breath at the thought that she was really being converted by a man who had come to use all his fervor upon her—and her mother was away.

"Come with us to America," he suddenly besought her; "come and help God's people, the remnant of Jacob."

"To America? That's far away. How could I?" The actuality scared her.

"Your sister and her husband, the wheelwright, are coming," he hastened on. "They bade me ask you. There will be need for many wheels and many carts, and for all the young and strong, for God's work is a mighty work."

Work? She had enough of that here. Her mind was too wondrous with names and bones coming together, dew and snails, scarlet, goldfish and harlots, chasms, Indians and husbands, to consider more drudgery. "And are there men in America?" she demanded swiftly.

"Men? Why yes."

"Many men?"

"Many, many men, though there's always need for more."

The stringy missionary seemed spattered with the warm livid words he had uttered. What were his initials? "What may your name be?" she asked.

"John McAuley, from Edinburgh, but I've been to America."

"S. B. or perhaps E. H.," she thought. "And are you married?"

"Yes, and my wife will look after you all in the ship that sails on the first of June."

"And are all the men in America married?" Now that he stood, she realized that he was as old as her father, and bandy-legged and hen-toed.

"In America there's many as aren't."

“And will they be wanting to marry?”

“There’s many that’s looking for wives. Will you come?”

“Who would pay for my coming?”

“Your sister and the wheelwright would bring you.”

A cart could, it could take her to a ship, and a ship could take her to a husband. She would do what she would do, to-day, to-day. Now for her mother. “I’ll go,” she said.

3

The luck of the dew was upon Eilley Orrum compelling her on to the certainty of a fruitful expanding life. She listened impatiently to Hugh and Davie resume their droning of the catechism, bustled small Jeanie, and made her blow her nose five times. Then, since the habit of obedience to parental authority wore well in spite of her rebellion, she put into the soup as usual whatever was available, a handful of barley, some carrots and leeks, part of a savoy cabbage that might as easily have gone to the hens, and, absently persuading a small fire to burn slowly on the hearth, turned to the hated potatoes and a milk pudding. A queen in America would be beyond and above such degrading drudgery. The dinner was on the table when the rest of the family returned from the hard, hopeless preaching of the kirk. On the Sabbath, fortunately, not a dish

would be washed. After dinner they adjusted themselves for an afternoon of holy somnolent calm. Her father, when he felt moved, would read to them from the Bible. Otherwise they would merely sit.

"I'm going to America," Eilley boldly disturbed the calm before it became too profound.

"To America!" her mother gave flippancy no serious consideration. "Such foolishness, and this the Sabbath! Be quiet now and meditate on the holy words of God."

Eilley could never understand why her mother, seventh child as she was, should always be aghast at her own daughter's notions. All sense of distinction as a seventh child had been pressed flat as the grass under a board by those hard years as a cotter's wife, always stirring, beating, wiping, scrubbing. Eilley's first remembrance was of her mother and father going out to the fields together with hacks and hoes. Unless she could go away on this ship, she herself, like her older sisters, might soon be put out to work as one mouth too many for that cot any longer, and then hope might die. She would risk the full fury at once. "I've been converted," she began again with a leap into the perilous pit of her mother's anger.

"Converted?" her mother glowered and trembled at the plague that had come nigh her dwelling, and on any other day would have smothered Eilley with stormy fearful words.

“Yes, the missionary came and converted me while you were at the kirk, and now I’m going to America with Betsy and Jim.”

“Converted by a Mormon—behind my back! May God forgive the heedless and backsliding!” The holy Sabbath struggled to dam her rage, but a dam may leak even on the Sabbath. “You’ll stay in your own country,” she crushed rebellion with words she could trust, “and follow in piety the God of your fathers.”

“I will go,” Eilley thought without saying a word; “I’m going to see the whole world and live in my palace. I’ll ride in a cart and sail in a ship, and I won’t stop until I come to a mountain.” The daughter of kings needed escape with a desperate hunger that no words could batter down.

They sat rigid in the Sabbath silence, her father dumbly content in his uneasiness to let her mother suppress nonsense. Eilley knew that her mother would make the next move, she had decided to go, and now she would wear out her mother with calmness. For half an hour they stared into different corners of the room, though Eilley was really staring at some bones which she was making into a man of considerable brawn. Then the older woman’s curiosity broke.

“When did Betsy say that?” Ever since her marriage Betsy had lived sadly, almost sourly, beyond the parental scope.

"Say what, mother?"

"You well know what I mean. When did Betsy tell you she was going to this America?"

"She didn't tell me, mother. The gentleman told me, and said it would be fine and easy for me to go with my sister and her lawful wedded man."

At that the Sabbath dam overflowed, the words falling in not quite a deluge. The Good Book, it seemed, said, "Children, obey your parents in all things," and the minister said these Mormons were dangerous, he had said it again this very morning, and some at the kirk had even said they had carried off all the girls of many a village in the lowlands, and where they had carried them, God alone knew. Eilley listened to the phrases splash. Her father had sternly taken up the Good Book.

"I'm going to America, mother," she repeated when the overflow at length ceased; "Betsy and Jim are going to take me."

Her mother was helpless. "Mormons! Saints indeed! Raiders! Fiends! . . ." The dam was splitting, but Eilley's father buttressed it with a pat verse. "The eye that despiseth to obey her mother," he read, "the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

Eilley's eyes regarded her parents without a flicker. Let the ravens pick them out and the eagles eat them if

they could. "I've been converted, and I'm going to America with Betsy and her Jim," she reiterated. "'Tis all arranged now," she added piously, "for the glory of God."

The Sabbath might have been utterly desecrated, had not Jim and Betsy themselves appeared to announce their own decision. From them the exasperated mother got only the same obstinacy, except that Betsy's reasoning was practical. "There's wheels and carts to be made there," she said, "more than here, and there's bound to be many things for a strong girl to do."

In the twilight Eilley's father vented his good wife's feelings by reading aloud the whole rampant book of Nahum. The ship would sail on the first of June. "There's gold in America," Eilley hummed in her mind as her father read on about the Lord's severity, "and silver and silks and all manner of precious clothing. Some day I'll be coming to Cannon wearing my rubies."

CHAPTER TWO

1

AND so indeed the daughter of kings went to America but more to pursue the promise of great delight than to help colonize a new country or win it for the Mormon faith. Knowing little of the aims of the church and nothing of its struggle against opposition, she set off lightly for Nauvoo. Amid the huddle of converts, she was thrilled by the ocean, the cities, the railroads, untold forests, hills and streams, even while she dreamed on about "the land upon the mountains," of which the so deeply earnest Elder McAuley had read from the Good Book. That land would be watered by slender crooked torrents subsiding for her special pleasure through reeds into a shallow lake. Before a mountain strewn with gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks, she would accept the husband whom destiny had prepared, and while he built her palace she would begin at once to have a dozen beautiful children. In such a fine world marriage should be simple.

Then at last in mid-August she heard the screech of

saws and the tapping of hammers, and through the sweet clover and buckwheat smelled the fresh planks and sawdust of the growing town by the Mississippi. Mountains? Gold? Ahead only more hills like buttocks plumped themselves beyond this unforeseen river which flaunted before her merely a disappointing concern for its own affairs. With a stupefying flow, it carried down soil and débris, came from nowhere, went nowhere, did nothing but halt in its egotism her headlong advance. She could hardly set up her throne in a swamp. To Eilley every geographical fact was a potential ready servant. Suddenly she knew that Nauvoo must be but a pausing place along her privately brilliant way. Well, what she could do, she would do with a will. At the proper time she would direct the Saints to go forward, would they but acknowledge her peculiar importance. Meanwhile she would inspect the available husbands who should be crowding around her, for with a duly prominent and biddable husband she could refashion even these surroundings.

In the quiet bareness of an upper room the newcomers met that evening for prayer, joy in the Lord, and expounding of the new gospel of self-congratulation. Among too many young women to be comforting to Eilley, for she had not asked Elder McAuley if there would be many husband-seeking maidens in Nauvoo, the elders awed her as, godly and capable, they moved

from one group to another welcoming the arrivals. It was good to feel desirable in that gathering together of the people, though she had not as yet been singled out. For the bridegroom whom she had left Connon to meet, she looked here and there with the natural oil of gladness radiant on her face. One particularly brisk elder, well built and with the blue flame of assured eminence in his eyes above a beard that reminded her of the burning bush that was not burned, rubbed his hands at the very sight of her. "It's Elder Hunter," some one whispered, and "H for Hunter," she murmured the magic letter triumphantly to herself—but the moving crowd bore away her prize.

They sat down, and another elder began to explain the appropriate, absorbing text, "In multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." She listened, quietly exalted, mingling a mental picture of a cool solicitous mountain with that of her man of bone and sinew, to stave off the pleasant drowsiness from the humidity. At nine o'clock they once more moved about, the elders garrulous over possessing the gate of their enemies. Against the azure plaster ruddy youths like yearlings stood awkwardly beside their bouncing girls or wives. With a deep twinge Eilley liked the distant ones better than those at hand. An S. B. among those young men might offer to take her home,

but alas, they all seemed occupied. Then from the other side of the room Elder Hunter sought her out, spoke to her kindly, and shifted from one foot to the other as he watched hopefully for some sign of response, while she smiled and, to her chagrin, blushed. She would go gravely with this dignified elder, though they were immediately surrounded by elderly sisters who questioned him to the very door of her boarding place on points of doctrine.

The next day Jim Livingstone began to build his house, peaked and pining, like many another house quickly erected. Elder Hunter, passing by, invited Eilley to drive with him out to see the site. Beside him in the buggy, she sat tensely modest while he talked of the temple the Saints were erecting slowly in the style of grandiose greatness ordained by the Lord for Nauvoo, and of the Lord's loving-kindness in converting her before that greatness was achieved. It reassured her to feel him vibrate with the fervor of his pious discourse. Uneventfully they returned, subdued by the heavy heat, with decorum preserved, and Eilley's boundless faith in the snail intensified.

As Elder McAuley and Betsy had promised, work was plentiful. The hard round of Cannon was even increased here where she had to sew rag carpets, paint baseboards and doors, and clear away endless litter in the new house, in addition to doing the more familiar

tasks that repeated themselves identically day by day. Yet amid all this her conviction that they must go on stimulated her, for Jim had begun his cart making. Hay carts, grain carts, dung carts, he turned them out as if under pressed orders. Never had he worked with such energy and enthusiasm in Connon. Wheels and more wheels had to be made with a strange wild zeal, out of stock clumsily cut that year and left to dry as best it might. Wheels, Eilley knew, should not merely lumber in from fields to barns and cribs, but should sweep on to the high places.

About Nauvoo there was an abandon that was both reprehensible and exciting. At a neighboring farm she helped cook for the threshers, powerful, hungry men in the pride of youth, their necks and forearms tanned and tantalizing. With Betsy by her side she worked the harder, stiffening herself against such temptations. Wondering and calculating she kept close to Betsy as they went quickly home at midnight after the dish-washing, and turned her head away that she might not see some of those coveted younger men coming from a near-by stranger's house. "God, I wanted that, I needed it!" she heard one say, and thought about it for days, trying not to understand all it signified in the strange new community life. Married men had tried to walk home with her from meeting, but she knew their wives, lucky women, confined to the house while they awaited

new babies, and she would not walk with the impious men, but clung to Jim and Betsy. In one week three boys were born, and Eilley, envious, took her turn with the other neighbors in doing the necessary work for the resting mothers. Primly pursuing her duties and voraciously her thoughts, she was amazed that God should provide so plentifully for others while she was left, at the full round age of fifteen, a barren woman. She would pray again, and harder. God must be maturing a consequential husband worthy to help perpetuate her line.

Edward Hunter, himself of Scottish parentage—Eilley had satisfied herself by cautious inquiry that his name was Edward—had sold his farm in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and come to purchase a new one on the banks of the river near Nauvoo. Since his arrival, it was said with pride, he had given fifteen thousand dollars to the church. At some unknown time he had buried a wife. Now he was a hustling, strutting, highly regarded Saint, rubbing his palms together at the meeting as if he wanted to do something with Eilley, but too busy with harvesting and church affairs to proceed with his impulses.

Of these things she spoke to her sister. "Perhaps I can do something with him!" she remarked blithely.

Robust Betsy was reproachful: "Eilley! He's an elder of the church, and it's more fitting that you should have respect. You've no right to talk that way."

"I have respect," said Eilley, astonished; "I know 'tis fitting to be respectful, for he's a wealthy man and some day will be great in the church."

"Elder Hunter knows how to farm. Look at his farm now, Eilley, and him only a year here."

Eilley had observed his farm and considered his prosperity as means to a greater end than agriculture. Always bedraggled, pressed down, flurried, Betsy, with her two-year-old Allan at her feet and expecting again, looked forty instead of twenty-five. Elder Hunter's wife would never look like that. Eilley would have Elder Hunter if she wanted him. As his fine lady, she might make him head of the church in place of Joseph Smith, the fearsome prophet, and direct him what to do. The snail had said E. H. It frustrated and inflamed her to wait so endlessly.

The snail was right. A short month after her advent in Nauvoo, Eilley was suddenly married to Edward Hunter. She never quite knew how it had come about. One evening at meeting she fixed her gaze on his shrub-like face. The next afternoon as he drove her out toward his fields, so adroitly did he claw her waist that for one bewildered moment she thought he was going to bite her, though she knew he was spiritually minded. Twice on the cheek the shrub kissed her and then soundly on the mouth.

Two days later they were married. Elder Orson

Hyde, the grim "Olive Branch of Israel," said the words which Eilley always remembered: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the holy priesthood," he half sang them beneath his scowl, "I pronounce you legally and lawfully husband and wife for time and eternity. I seal upon you the blessings of the holy resurrection with power to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, clothed with glory, immortality, and everlasting lives. And I seal upon you the blessings of thrones and dominions, and principalities and powers and exaltations, together with the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And I say unto you, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, that you may have joy and rejoicing in your prosperity in the day of the Lord Jesus, Amen."

In that month Eilley had heard the fine words at a dozen hurried marriages. She was cool but exultant as the community recognized that she had one of the foremost husbands in Nauvoo, and was about to multiply.

2

Multiplication, however, proved not so simple as it had seemed. At the next full moon she could hardly endure her eagerness. For a week her moods mounted day by day as she dreamed of the sublimity of her undertaking. Then in a few days of utter agony she gave up

hope—and again cast her hope forward. On one of those hopeless days Betsy was delivered of her second son, and for a week Eilley had to do her sister's housework in a fit of rebellion that had no ease. Her work was more insistent than ever, for she had more rooms and as the wife of an elder she was expected to lodge fresh converts who continued to arrive. At first she enjoyed entertaining them as guests, and then found them but wearisome boarders. When the moon waxed beyond the third quarter again, she wished she could turn them out, she let potatoes boil dry, she burned scones. When she did attempt to send away one woman who had refused to make her own bed, and the elder forbade such, she went to her room and cried, but soon again was bidding her time, for her dominion and exaltation must appear in this present perverse but enchanting world.

By Jim's forge youths of the town loitered and older men drew in to warm their chilly squabbles. Sometimes even the prophet stopped there to wrestle with some strapping braggart, and, downing his opponent easily, proceeded to spout a moral. By the third month that smithy seemed to Eilley the one heated spot in the region, and she would have gone there often, had not a wife's place been at home. The wheelwright was making money and keeping it, except for his exact tithes. Hatred of the Saints swirled in Eilley for days as if from beyond the hard crusted fields, and then it was gone, and she fell

to polishing every dull thing in the house with an energy that surely ought to make her husband love her more. With the constancy of her determination she put on comeliness. The unconcerned river froze lazily. Month after month she baked, washed, swept, and waited in desperation to multiply, almost torn asunder by longing and frustration as women gave birth to babies all around her and Betsy's child grew. She was surprised at the energy that succeeded the despair. She would have a child if it took her ten years.

Though great things were happening in the community, Eilley was not yet sensitive to history in the making, and shut her ears to gossip about some abnormal practise called polygamy. By the first plowing, the elder talked of sending to Pennsylvania for a niece to live with them, to help her, he said, about the house. He *was* thoughtful like that, though busy with great affairs. Yet she had no real part in his expanding prominence, for Nauvoo was a man's world, full of jealously submissive women from whom she kept her distance, not a world of her own. For her the wealth of grain, hay and potatoes was too soft, too vegetable. Of solid or at least glittering treasure she had dreamed ever since that May Day in Connon. She pondered the more deeply on this when the elders talked of scarlets and brocades, purples and fine linen, as fit only for destruction. Surely these fields and this river were far less enduring. The full

moons came and went until she dreaded them more than she had longed for them, since they brought her nothing but rending torment. When the hired men were lifting the potatoes in the autumn, her husband did send for his niece, in fact for two nieces. After a month they had so nettled Eilley that with a sudden rage she told him they must go. "They're no good to me, nor you either," she flared. So he balmily boarded them with a complacent old sour-face in the town. Year was following year as relentlessly as month had followed month. Even 1843 froze and melted into 1844. She was getting old while the terrible fruitless rise and fall of her expectations went on and on and on. Yet somewhere beyond that Mississippi, which incensed her because it was so soothing, success must be awaiting her impatiently.

Then politics and enmities crackled around her. She jumped at every shot and, still a loyal wife, wished that some one more exalted than her husband had been hit. When the hatred around the edges of the settlement exploded with the messy killing of Joseph Smith, she was startled by a reverent feeling that her destiny had willed it. For a feverish month she expected that her husband would succeed the prophet and establish her as the chief lady among the Saints. Finally one August morning she stood beside her husband in a grove by the river listening to the nervous harangue of a despicable Mr. Rigdon.

Her own unquenchable day-dreams seemed more real than the tiresome uncertainty of the scene. When Rigdon ceased, Brigham Young, returned without any one's knowing it from the east, dramatically began to speak against the wind behind their backs. Turning, Eilley shuddered and at once knew that he, as commanding as the prophet, would be elevated, but that he would advance her elder. Though such advancement could mean little to her as long as she had no child, she welcomed the new challenging opportunity.

Nauvoo began to talk of the Rocky Mountains to which the prophet might have escaped. They must, they must go on to the mountains which after all existed. How slow they were! Since her marriage sixty full moons had wrenched her faith and dulled her immediate expectation. The power of a mountain to yield gold and, with its high invigorating air, to produce even a child, energized her anew as she made bedding and clothing while the men made tools. At last the Saints began to move in the wagons of Jim Livingstone and the other wheelwrights. In the second caravan, which followed two months after the first exodus led by Brigham Young, Eilley left that valley of the slow Mississippi, as she had left Cannon, excited by the glory that was to come.

Like a boundless aisle to Eilley's deferred land of bliss, the long flat country steadily rose. Scooping

water from shallow streams, roasting the meat of buffalo calves as sweet and tender as veal, gathering wild currants and elderberries, sleeping in blankets, were stimulating rites for an ordained processional. On the Platte River Sioux Indians, splendidly naked except for breech-cloths, came from a village, not to be queened over, but to beg tobacco. Their scent wove itself piquantly in with that of the horses and oxen, the hams, and the short curly buffalo grass.

"Why do they wear white shells hanging out of their ears?" asked Betsy's Allan who with Harry, now five, had chosen that day to ride with her in the wagon of the elder, captain of a hundred.

"They wear those shells," she explained, "just to show they wish they weren't so red."

"Red is a nice color," Harry maintained; "I wish I was red."

"White is the best color for people," she urged.

"Can't they ever be white?" Harry demanded.

"Of course not," Allan declared promptly.

"They might turn white some day," Eilley said, "if they're good enough."

"I don't believe it," Allan announced.

Then, "Why are they cold," Harry inquired, "just in the middle?"

"They aren't cold," Eilley said quickly; "they wear those cloths to be decent."

"What is decent?" Harry was curious.

"Decent," she hesitated, "is proper and modest."

"Oh," he said.

To the south Eilley saw her first mountains like storm-clouds, remote, arrogant, hostile. After all Brigham Young had rejected the sterile splendor of the Rockies. That ridge and the sandy rocks rising abruptly in huge masses from the land narrowed her aisle and hinted by their very hauteur of the special friendly peaks she must have. A carcass here, whiffle-trees a discarded Conestoga wagon farther on amid dried buffalo dung, but sharpened her confidence that she, Eilley Orrum, was going on to her rightful estate, over the bones of unimportant predecessors. When she spied a rusted girdle and its crook by a spring, she seized it thriftily. "Where I come from," she explained to the Vermont woman in the next wagon, "we use that to make scones on."

By the Sweetwater in a bowery whitened by a light September snow, Brigham Young himself met them, and they had a great dinner. Roasted and broiled beef, pies, cakes, biscuit, butter, peach sauce, coffee, tea, sugar, all was as proper as if she had been serving a feast in her own mansion. For once she proved her affability, her profusion with little, and realized herself as a gracious hostess.

Through wild and melancholy clefts brightened by

hop-vines, alders, and black birches, they reached the extensive valley of the Great Salt Lake. Beyond deep green patches which must be fertile, she looked to ghastly mountains west of the lake with a ridge of white rock salt beneath them. Nearer the lake they passed bulrushes and sand-hill cranes, while large, loathsome black crickets covered the ground. Her husband said they would be good for fattening hogs. At the sight of them and at his words, her old emptiness stormed through her and left her once more with only the defeated consciousness that this was not her valley.

Between the Great Salt Lake and the vainglorious Wahsatch Mountains Elder Hunter put up a house of blue-gray adobe brick. Jim Livingstone began to make more wheels and to do general blacksmithing. Beyond the broad dusty streets of the settlement, the farmers built fences, roads, bridges, and dug ditches around and checks through their fields for the snow water from the canyons. Sawmills and grist-mills whirled in the distance. For three weeks at a time Eilley would share the rugged enthusiasm of the Saints at the magnitude of their adventure, and then for a week the lake itself would shock her into a bottomless horror with that salt around its edges, its swarms of insects, the saltier desert beyond, and the thin whiteness of the air which ever and again turned to dazzling yellow. Long afterward she was to view the experience sentimentally enough from another

valley, but in the midst of it she was time after time unnerved.

Her husband, she had learned, was forty-nine when they were married. He might have been any age; she had not cared. Though he might have almost half his life yet to live, what further could she do with him? Could she have misread the omen of the snail? He had transported three nieces to Utah, two from Illinois, Maggie and Susan, and one other, Tinie, unaccountably brought from the lowlands of Scotland. No one of the fair and rotund three was more than twenty-two. He boarded them with the tight-mouthed harridan who had kept the two in Nauvoo. Often he stayed away all night, or came so late that sleep had overtaken her early in the morning. Maggie and Susan and Tinie! She, like an eagle, could scratch out their eyes and eat them. Though Elder Hunter might become the greatest of ten thousand, and she, by some miracle, the power behind the greatest, she was aware mainly that she had stooped to marry a lowlander with a persistent fondness for the offshoots of his family. Yet the destiny which had brought her thus far could take her over this acrid horizon, and if she had only been her mother's seventh daughter, she could have discerned that destiny long before each soul-whetting event.

In 1849 Edward Hunter was made bishop of one of the city wards. Seven years after her marriage she was

a bishop's wife, but to be a bishop was his glory, not hers. The Saints valued a bishop's wife less than a sea-gull. The preferment she had expected when she had married him for time and eternity had turned to harsher alkali than that around the lake. That spring she set out and tended a doughty riot of daisies, tulips, phlox, sego lilies, and a bed of mint, while she tried to conjure up an excuse for leaving him. Some way through these mountains, which were not close enough to embolden and comfort her but only high enough to make her dizzy, would open and free her from all Mormons. The forty-niners scrambling past seemed for a few months to show her such a way. Gold! That was one of the things she must have. Some Saints went with the Argonauts. Even Betsy and Jim wavered. "Poor, ignorant, pusillanimous creatures," Brigham Young called those who deserted. Eilley would have pleaded with the bishop to accompany them, had she not, knowing how satisfied he was with his new position, determined to go without him. "The Lord is prospering us here," he said piously whenever she mentioned them, for, shrewd Scot that he was, he traded with the passing wagon-trains. To herself she derided his prosperity, and waited for God's confidential guidance. In the summer she was glad to be temporarily rid of him when he was sent to the frontier of the recently organized Utah territory to put into operation the Perpetual Emigrating Fund for the continual converts from

the east and Europe, and when afterward he was absent for weeks exploring distant parts of the region lately wrested from Mexico. And around her the welter of women ever gave birth to more of the babies whom she coveted with greedy agony.

3

Rumors she had heard and suspicions she had harbored ever since they had come to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Sixty more moons had racked her with their waning. She would have a child if it required her to change husbands. No matter that her husband was appointed presiding bishop of the church. Other women might whisper behind her back, but she knew what she was about, and would act when she would act. "Let every man have his own wife," the Good Book said. In 1852 after ten years of their childless married life, fully half of which she had waited for this very day, the eruption came. On the last Sunday in August, Eilley heard the president announce and justify plural marriages for time and eternity. "If any man espouse a virgin," the holy revelation declared, "and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent ["and the first give her consent!" Eilley choked with indignation,] and if he espouse the second and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then he is justified."

The bishop, silent and uneasy, drove a smoldering Eilley home from the conference.

"Well, I suppose," he muttered sheepishly inside their door, "Maggie and Susan and Tinie should live here now."

"As your nieces?" she sneered.

"They're not my nieces," he snapped, defiant at last; "you know they're my lawfully sealed wives."

"Wives? Your concubines," she snorted; "it's many a day I've suspected the respectability of your frequent nieces."

"I'm telling you," he persisted, "I married Maggie and Susan in Illinois, and Tinie as soon as she came. And now we bishops are going to have everybody know that our wives are our wives."

"You'll not bring them here," she was dogged; "the Good Book says if you so much as look on another woman to lust after her, you've committed adultery with her in your heart."

"I'm telling you it's marriage," he protested; "the spirits have to be born, and they have to find their tabernacles. God has done this to rear up a seed to inherit the earth. The bishops all teach it and the president too."

"And I'm telling you, you'll rear no seed in adultery here, you and your God."

"Much seed you've reared up to me in our holy wedlock!"

"And your concubines," she threw back her insult for his, "will add no holiness to our living house."

"I'll build you a new house next this one, Eilley."

"I'll not live next the house of concubines."

"You'll still be my wife, Eilley."

"I'll play second fiddle to no man. I'll never consent." There she stuck.

The bishop commanded and wheedled, paced into the kitchen and tiptoed back into the parlor. "I've married them already," he whined through his whiskers.

"And married you can be, either to them or to me," that was final.

Jerking out of the house, she chased a competent rooster into the inevitable corner, seized him in his spluttering terror, and at once wrung his neck while his red feathers scattered amid spurts of another red that gratified her rage. Quietly washing her hands in the kitchen, she knew that fresh adventures were approaching, the doors flung wide to her. Within a week she went firmly to the bishop of the next ward and bought her divorce for fifteen dollars. "Now," she said to herself as she clutched the paper, "I can get somewhere after all this hawering about. Now for rubies and a baby."

CHAPTER THREE

1

IN THE general store of Enoch Reese the thus released wife of the bishop began to sell calico and flannel, bonnets and shawls, while she awaited a more practicable bridegroom. She was twenty-five now, more experienced in these matters. Jim and Betsy, with whom she lived again, so craved California that they would have apostatized if they had not feared Brigham Young's threats of a repulsive doom for that kind of greed. Eilley feared no doom, but the more she noted the mania of the gold-seekers and the discouragement of some already returning, the more California bewildered her. Since she had not discovered the gold there, she would be, if she followed this rush, but one of the rabble, not an honored oracle. The delayed Argonauts, moreover, did not look serviceable. To find her fortune in some spot peculiarly her own elsewhere, she needed something of more finesse than a snail. One day late in the spring a Yankee limped into the store to trade his plow, brought from Maine, for flour and beans.

"You're headed for hell in them there gold mines," crabbed old Reese notified him, "but you'll need flour to get there."

"Flour, beans, potatoes and a pair of blankets," the Yankee demanded.

"Not so much, brother, not so much." They dickered, and in the end the Yankee started away with half what he needed. Beside Eilley he drew from his pocket a glass ball which she instantly recognized as an instrument of Providence. "Two pair of shoe strings for that," he said.

Crafty Reese grasped it before she could reach out her hand, hefted it in contempt, and set it by his ledger. "One pair," he reflected.

"Two."

"One."

"I want it," Eilley suddenly declared; "I'll work a whole day for it."

Old Reese cocked one eye at the queer fanciful ways of women. "It ain't worth a day," he said.

"I want it," she insisted.

"All right," he told the Yankee, "two pair, and look out for the arsenic springs t'other side of the lake."

That evening a gift of the Holy Ghost descended on Eilley. Fixing her mind on the globe from a distance of ten feet while an orange ray from the sunset over the lake flashed on it, she was encouraged to see in it a tri-

angle brightening, a singular monument of stones, she quickly fancied, or a bare peak blazing with assurance. With a square of black velvet, salvaged from the tight bishop's house, she covered her head and contemplated again her treasure. The highlight flickered. She could distinguish herself by the monument or the mountain, but nothing else in detail. To that pillar or peak she was satisfied that she must push on. With this globe she could penetrate the mystery of those insupportable ten years and perceive the features of an adequate husband.

Every night she tried her luck, but always her own black eyes gloated back at her, always until one Friday in August she mistily descried another face. In the afternoon a man had bought a waistcoat that a Missourian had left a couple of days before in exchange for half a pound of bacon, a blue waistcoat from St. Louis to dance in. Eilley had stayed away from the Saintly Saturday night dances at which the men seemed to be looking only for fifth or tenth wives. Among so many of the harlots whom in Cannon she had ignorantly thought it would be nice to have, she must maintain her high-mindedness. Now in the sphere her own blooming countenance would dissolve only to reappear as this man's face with that young hedge of beard around his pursing lips. In her dreams she studied those features, promising by their shyness, a quality she valued after the intractable bishop, that here was a man she could

have to herself. He came back the next afternoon for two buttons. Agitated by his purchase, he had not noticed the shortage, and old Reese had covered it up. From a torn and moth-eaten coat in a pile of rags she ripped two that almost matched, and, with her forehead bumping against his thick-set figure, sewed them on.

"I've been here but a week," he said shamefacedly, "and I've nobody to keep me in buttons."

"No trouble to a body," she cheered him; "it takes but a minute." She soon learned that he was Alexander Cowan, lately gardener to a baronet in Ayrshire, and now trying his hand at a plot of new-fenced acres to the north. He did not ask her to the dance. "A. C.?" she thought ruefully, but probably, having had the bishop, she was now beyond that snail's range of prophecy.

Since the dance led to nothing for him, he hung around and took her home several evenings for he wanted a wife right speedily. In a week Eilley had captured Alec Cowan, or he, her. Late one afternoon she married him, again for the indefinite period of time and eternity, with the blessings of fruitfulness, joy and rejoicing in prosperity, and he carried her off to the cabin he had thrown up on his acres. Thick biceps around her waist inspirited her afresh. Less than forty, he seemed the able-bodied young man she needed. Now she would show the bishop and his lawless wives what she could do with a respectable second husband.

A month later, at the very crisis of her new confidence, she heard that auburn Maggie had borne the bishop a daughter. To the neighbor who told her she promptly expressed her doubt as to the paternity of the infant, but in a few days the doubt turned to stinging hatred as she again lost her hope. When Alec came in from the field, he found such an array of scones on the table for their supper that he thought his wife had gone daft, and through the night her pillow was wet with silent tears when she was not gritting her teeth in snatches of wild slumber. Thus month inexorably followed month, and nothing happened. For all his savings, however, Alec was too poor to think of more than one wife. Eilley saw to it that hacking out the brush as well as the ordinary cultivation of their cleared land kept him busy from dawn to dusk, but, gardener that he was, he pottered. On Sundays she listened emptily to Brigham Young's sermons which included instructions on how to feed, clothe and correct children.

The next summer they harvested almost no crops, for crickets ate the grain and the cricket-loving sea-gulls sated their appetites long before they could venture up to the Cowan place. Then talking again with the same neighbor, Mrs. Hawkins, Eilley learned that the vile Tinie had presented the busy bishop with a son. She must get away from this outrageous city where concubines could be more fruitful than an honest wife, she

must. God had but temporarily closed her womb as a sign. The prospect to the west hypnotized her. Across the lake, white salt danced in the clear glare, and between small peaks wide blue gaps fell off into nothing, draining away, it always seemed, her creativeness. If she were surrounded by an unbroken range, she could conserve and direct her energy. Much as she had listened to returning stragglers, she never could contrive in her mind more than blurred segments of the region beyond those edges. "Sand and blackness and desolation," Alec repeated whenever she wondered aloud. Realizing that she had been beaten by the once despised Maggie and Tinie, she challenged her sphere to produce a grassy valley and a lake without whiteness. The crystal was watery with her tears, but soon the water eddied and composed itself into a lake, around which grasses fat with seed waved in a breeze from a mountain, her mountain. The peep-stone had accepted her challenge. It did more. The lake hardened into that old pillar of stones and softened madly into a grasshopper which changed into a crowing baby. She laughed aloud and tossed her determined head, so long since beatified by the May dew, for she was only twenty-seven.

2

To Eilley, Elder Hyde always seemed made of gristle instead of bone, though perhaps that was how an Olive

Branch should look, tough but bending. Tough and tireless, he went exploring, and when he rode back powdered with gray, he reported that in a valley below the final mountains land waited to be cultivated, timber to be cut and water to be trained into ditches from many a cold splashing creek. Feeling strangely that her vision had directed the Olive Branch, Eilley immediately and thankfully joined herself and her husband to the party which prepared to grasp this valley. "Mr. Cowan is very desirous of going," she informed the elder, apprising Alec of her action later.

Late in the spring of 1855 they started. The Olive Branch took along his fourth wife. Beyond the beds of salt in which their wheels made sharp tracks, the trail rose along bare wind-swept shapes so that they climbed out of a dead sink through rock débris scarcely more living. To Eilley, as for a week they wound with a zeal now lifted, now slipping, along the paradoxical Humboldt, that river which disappointed when it should have encouraged them, it was as if she were wrenching from Alec's sand, blackness and desolation the energy which she had lost over the rim of the Salt Lake Valley. Amid sable mountains, huge but small looking, as if charred by fire and flung together in cragged heaps, the thin stream continually sank in the sands. Yokes, chairs, stoves, ax heads and broken rifles strewed the buffalo grass and alkali, interspersed with stinking bones.

At any moment those bones, very many and very dry, might reassemble themselves, stand upright, and trot on. Eilley would have delighted to order them about, but as it seemed harder to reanimate actual bones than bones in the abstract, she contented herself with counting and gloating over smashed wagon bodies. Ninety-four in one afternoon. Where so many had failed she would luxuriate. It was a glorious land of despondency in which to exercise her dormant talents for vitalizing a waste.

"I'll make the world come through here again some day," she told Alec.

"How?" he regarded her with amazement.

"Some day I'll make my land greater than Brigham Young's," she reiterated without specifying her method.

Finally in June they plunged through willows, alders and cottonwoods to Johntown in a winding gulch with a trickling slimy creek. The gulch without any grandeur set her heart to skipping as if she had known it before. She was justified. It was the very region for a monument of stones to mark her supernatural good fortune, a place to dig in, to blast and shatter, but not to live in. Here slouched Indians, very different from those lean superior creatures of the plains. These were so obviously inferior as to seem ready for her reign. Their short sturdy bodies, fat-hipped, held down their bow-legs nicely. The scent of them mixed with the witch-hazel smell of the sage-

brush. That night they danced in a slow tight circle around the fire. Facing inward, body set against body, the broad lumps slid and hopped from left to right to a stagnant chant. The hands of each clasped against the thighs the hands next. Shoulders against shoulders, arms against arms, hips against hips, they moved in solid rapture. At first only the bucks, then the mahalies too, while the Saints watched. Late in the moonlight the Washoes let some of the Saints into the circle, and Eilley furtively wedged herself between two heavy bucks for several long minutes, feeling that she had the divine right to be there. She must experience all such new things.

A few days later they arrived at the valley. At the first glimpse of real saw-tooth mountains ahead, her whole frame and flesh seemed renovated for ever by her trances coming true. The timbered range mottled with snow stood before her bluntly, not insolently to one side. As out of one wide valley the wagon-train mounted a steep grade to a divide, Eilley strained from her seat to look. Over the divide she beheld a lake, her lake, flat and placid in a narrower green valley, her valley, between the commanding speckled mountains and the commanded dun hills. The ridges to the west were cut by deep gorges and landslides, and in long gores young forests leaped from the unmistakable granite buttresses of the Sierras, there a semicircular wall of defense and dignity. Washoe Valley! Her ball had shown her

exactly that. In Washoe Valley the caravan of adventurous Saints halted, pleased with the spot to which the Olive Branch had led them.

In the mêlée of the unpacking, Eilley ran north through the wild grasses. She returned with news for Alec. "There," she pointed north, "there's the land we're to take up."

While Elder Hyde and the others put up a sawmill, Alec, with the money from the sale of their land in the Salt Lake Valley, obediently bought from two Johntown prospectors the half-section which Eilley indicated, and built a log cabin thatched with shakes. Behind the cabin, springs, both hot and cold, enough to bathe a hundred rich miners at once, bubbled and flowed with more luxury than she could have asked, and below, the shaggy meadow extended to the lake. Alec was good at laying out a gentle abode in such a setting. Three years before, a man named Clark had settled in a cabin not far away and called his domain the Garden of Eden.

3

More than ever now that the bishop, his wives and his offspring had dwindled to a far fringe of her consciousness, she was sure that here she could burst into flower as easily as a gaudy snow-plant. Here on her estate, the site of her palace, she longed for the congenial

atmosphere to work its miracle in her. Alec, vigorous enough but delicate minded, never spoke of any such hope, and for him the fresh atmosphere really did not seem enough to perform a miracle. He would open his lips after supper as if he were about to whistle, and then he would sigh. "It's a lonely place," he would say.

"Lonely? It's the paradise of God," she would chide him; "if you would but like it."

That first autumn their crops, started late, were light, but somehow they lived. The Olive Branch declared it was honeydew from heaven that fell bountifully on the cottonwoods in the lower gullies where the people washed the leaves and boiled the sugar into syrup. Eilley never did that. She inclined more to the theory of a Gentile wood-chopper that the "honeydew" was deposited by tree lice. Learning from the easy-going Indians, she did gather choke-cherries and pine-nuts. With a pole she would beat the bright grass-green cones from the little trees whose knotted branches stood out in stiff zigzags. Then she would gather her crop into heaps and burn brushwood over them until the resin be-draggling the cones was scorched off, the nuts were slightly roasted, and the scales opened. The waxen kernels, sweet and delicious, she would boil into soup as the Washoes showed her.

In Washoe Valley wheel-making lagged, and Jim and Betsy, discontented, hurried over the pass to Cali-

fornia with their two boys before the first snow. Eilley was glad to see them go. She could slough off relatives and not miss them. At the first opportunity she made Alec ride with her to that gulch which the prospectors called Gold Canyon, at the bottom of which she had danced with the Indians. There a man named Jacob Rose had brought in Chinamen who camped in huts of stones, hardened mud and tules, to dig a ditch for the water he needed from the Carson River for his placer work. The woebegone spot still entranced Eilley. She and Alec watched a sluggish Gentile, wary of them, shaking in a boxlike thing, which he called a rocker, the coarse gravel from which he might get, he said, two or three dollars' worth of gold a day.

"And how much would a ton of gold be worth?" she asked him.

"A ton of gold? A million dollars, I guess," he was casual.

A million dollars! Some day she would have that and more. "In the winter," she told Alec, "there will be little for me to do on the ranch. Then I'll come over here and cook for these miners. We should be putting money by, and," she added, "this should be the place for me to find my mine."

Alec nodded in blank approval, for Eilley always made the decisions. Yet she was perplexed that she could not see there, with any second sight, gold by the

ton, nor this phlegmatic husband of hers with any gold whatever. Herself, yes, as surely as heaven; Alec, no.

Later in the summer she rode one day, astride without Alec, around the foot of the mountains to Mormon Station, now named Genoa by Elder Hyde, after the birthplace of Columbus, that other great discoverer. At Genoa, tucked close against the lupin-sprinkled range, she alighted beside the store of John Reese, a brother of Enoch. The hangers-on greeted her respectfully, for women usually walked, never having far to go, and a comely woman on a horse must be somebody. Eilley, sure that she was somebody, was there for the important purpose of securing some cows which, at least, she could set to increasing. She inquired for her old neighbor, Mrs. Hawkins, recently arrived with her husband and cows as well as oxen.

"Why, it's Eilley!" Sister Hawkins cried, "and how is Alec?"

"Well enough, and how is the city?" Eilley noted with jealousy and solicitude that she was "expecting."

"Still a-marrying and a-giving in marriage something scandalous. Why the president was a-bragging from the pulpit of thirteen sons living and five dead, telling how he was an instrument—an instrument he said—of preparing tabernacles for spirits that had to be born even if they had to come to brothels for their fleshly coverings. A good place to be from."

"Yes, and a good place to stay from," Eilley agreed; "brothels indeed! But I've found a good place to stay in where there aren't any brothels."

"And where may that be?" Sister Hawkins seemed surprised that there should be such a neglected place.

"Washoe Valley, and Mr. Cowan will never allow any brothels there. Come and see it."

"And how could I come that far to visit? Twenty miles from here, and me expecting."

"Come and live there next us. I'll trade some of my land for your cows, and you can come and I can take care of you at your lying-in."

It would be good to see a baby again. That night Eilley stopped with the Hawkinses, and, splendid in her ability to shape the affairs of others, achieved the exchange. In a few days they had ensconced themselves in a tent on the south quarter-section of the Cowans where Eilley kept them in milk, butter and eggs as part of the pleasant bargain. In the autumn heavy rains almost flooded the Hawkinses out of their tent, but they stuck to it, for the rain came and went. The labor began, however, in a cloudburst, and Eilley and an old mahalie were all the help her neighbors could get. It dignified her to be in charge of the case. The mahalie wanted to jump on the striving woman and press helpful knees about her waist. "Indian always jump," she said.

Eilley prevented that, and when the son was born,

named him Wally MacDougall. The grasshopper in the ball had turned into Wally's very image. In the morning they moved the mother and child to the Cowan cabin, where Eilley nursed them for two weeks, pretending that Wally was her own, until imperfections such as her own would never have convinced her that it could not have been merely Wally she had seen in her crystal. In the crystal she could distinguish clouds now, feathery as the wing of a quail or twisted as an Alpine white pine, then changing to men moving, withdrawing their stale presence, but leaving her surrounded by jostling crowds of other men more exhilarating. Destiny seemed about to require her to slough off her second husband, and indeed all the Saints, in order that she might yet become the tabernacle for that tiny spirit which had appeared first in the form of a grasshopper.

In November she made Alec build a cabin between Spofford Hall's store and Dutch Nick Ambrose's saloon in Gold Canyon, and there she began to board the miners who were not Saints but absorbing mortals. As she investigated the mining situation, for to locate a rich mine seemed as difficult as to multiply, she found that these Gentiles in their liquor railed against the Saints, calling them "whoremasters." When they were sober, she intimated that she quite agreed with them. Then, happy to begin her direction of affairs of state, she made Alec join them in a petition which prayed the California

legislature for the second time that Carson County, as the western half of Utah was now called, be annexed. Yet nothing seemed to come of it. She was glad, however, that Elder Hyde, having started his mill, had returned to the Great Salt Lake City.

That winter while she cooked and washed with the inspiring knowledge that a monument of stones such as she had seen in her ball marked a mining claim, she even told Mrs. Ellis, the only other woman in the canyon, that the Mormons would soon be going. Mrs. Ellis was helping with money two of Eilley's intermittent boarders, Hosea and Ethan Allen Grosch, highly serious sons of a clergyman in the east, who were sure that they were on the track of a great mine. The mining activity of the rest was too haphazard and petty. More and more she realized that with the handicap of Alec she would find it hard to turn her talents even toward acquiring wealth, since he had no ambition for either mining or ranching.

When they returned to the ranch in the spring, he would go on many an evening faithfully without her to the meeting in the schoolhouse. Otherwise they might both visit their neighbors, taking turns in holding Wally MacDougall. Eilley would cringe when he held the baby too long, grow indignant, and soon hustle him home. On Sunday she would nerve herself to attend the meeting once more because the few girls of the valley

would be there. She recoiled especially from those last mournful words of Moroni which they read so often: "I soon go to rest in the paradise of God until my spiritual body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the eternal Judge of both quick and dead, Amen." She was alive and meant to keep alive in this paradise of her own. Amid the handshakings after the meeting she thrust herself between Alec and the girls, and said all the "How-do-you-do, Sister," that was necessary. Once on the way home she called him Edward by mistake, because the dim bishop had revived in her mind, but he was too apathetic to notice.

4

In the summer welcome rumors from the east enheartened her. More Missourians, traditional enemies of the Mormons, were coming west to sprinkle arsenic and strychnine in the springs and water-holes of Utah. She hoped that their poison would corrode the Saints, unmarried girls and all, so that their bodies would never reunite. Then in September a message from Brigham Young ordered all the men back to the Great Salt Lake City. President Buchanan had threatened, the news ran, to send a military force to Utah to quell the "fanatical spirit" of the Mormons. Inwardly jubilant at the

news which she little understood except as a confirmation of what she had seen in her peep-stone, Eilley waited in rising excitement for Alec to return from the meeting with decision made.

"We'll have to go, Eilley," he brought her the message.

At last her chance had come to rid herself of the Saints for ever. "It is right for every able-bodied man to return at the president's command," she said virtuously; "I'll stay here and keep the ranch going and when the trouble is over and you come back in the spring you can attend to the crops."

He hesitated without being taken aback. "How can you stay here alone?" he inquired meekly.

"I've nothing earthly on my mind," she said; "the miners are not Saints and no Missourian will drop arsenic in their springs. It's decent work for a woman to feed these laboring men."

"Them Gentiles?" Alec's weak retort held all the spiteful scorn he could muster.

"Yes, Gentiles—why not? They're good providers." His objection unleashed her tongue. "I'm tired of the whole ruck of Mormons. I took you for my man, but I bought a pig in a poke. Now you want to go back to Zion and get you other wives. I know you and your lusts. The bishop went a-whoring and I left him." He winced. They never mentioned the bishop, and as for

going a-whoring . . . ! "The Good Book says a man shall cleave unto his wife," she had more breath, "and if you be tired of that, the best plan for you to do is to get out of this. I'll just stay here."

Spineless Alec, mouth awry, subsided. "We'll be coming back in the spring," he offered.

"You'll not come back to me," she was final now; "I'll not take back a man once he's gone, and I wouldn't take you anyway after all you've said."

Alec was confounded, but too timid to protest that he had said but a few sad words. It was a tame but mutually relieving end for a tame marriage. Toward the end of the month the wagon-train departed with a great lashing of horses and oxen. One Saint had sold an entire section below Johntown for a little plug pony. Alec required the Cowan horses and oxen to help transport the others, but her release was cheap at that price. With those he could make a fresh start in the Great Salt Lake City and doubtless soon win another wife or wives. Eilley watched them, Alec lost among the men, women and children, until the last wagon had bobbed in the dust over the divide, men moving, going, streaming away in a cloud, and leaving her among other men of more vim and mystery. Casting off a second husband, whom she had had only, as it were, on approval, was a calm enough experience. She went into her cabin and took out her crystal to look for another face.

BOOK TWO

MORTALS

CHAPTER FOUR

1

EACH crisis had advanced Eilley toward an appointed ultimate conquest, for as her conversion had brought her to America, so the bishop had taken her to Utah, and so she had pressed Alec on to Gold Canyon and Washoe Valley. Here the gulch was about to produce more gold than California in its heyday, and needed the guidance of an inspired prophetess. No doubt destiny had intended that, after enduring for fifteen years the worthlessness of Saintly husbands, she find riches first, create a city, and then confound Saint and harlot alike by bringing forth children in efficient succession in the cool retirement of her estate. At thirty she would select her third husband with peculiar wisdom. Thus with nothing earthly on her mind, she traded a cow for a donkey, a burro the miners called it, and set off on it to board for another winter the blustering men of Johntown.

There she directed her boarders to locate for her a dozen claims, each marked by a neat pile of stones like a hen sitting on golden eggs. Though the monuments

sat, it was true, on high difficult places which the men ridiculed, she liked best the rocks, daubed with yellow which they called porphyry, where they broke through the side of a volcanic butte excitingly black and deformed, and was sure they would multiply her wealth as the sand on the seashore until she could gather it in a bucket. Her boarders did seem miscellaneous to be worthy of sharing such prosperity. Some even looked like fornicators. She missed Hosea Grosch, the serious-minded, who with his brother, Ethan Allen, had named and explained to her the kinds of rock. "Hornblende and quartzite, crystalline limestone and propylite," they had talked in fine jargon for her to repeat in her mind. As the Saints had collected their belongings and greased their wheels, Hosea at his claim had struck his foot with a pick, and in two days had died of gangrene.

"If I'd been here," Eilley, flushed with power after her elimination of Alec, told Ethan, "I wouldn't have let him die."

"Couldn't get him down from the shack," Ethan lamented.

"I'd have gone up there to nurse him; but I'll not grieve for him and make him unquiet in the grave." Even as she said it, she felt curiously that his death was a link in the great chain of her future grandeur which she must steadily forge. No more would she grieve over Alec's shortcomings and disquiet him, for God had been

but teaching her to be more discriminating. The carnal advances of Old Virginia, who had lost his real name of Fenimore, Finney, or whatever it was, because he had hankered aloud so much after the Old Dominion, she repelled with easy indignation.

"Never ought to have stopped in this damned place," he would complain; "I'd have been rich by now if I'd gone on to Sacramento in 'forty-nine."

"Naw, I go there with my wash-bowl on my knee," Kentuck Osborne would scout the idea, "and nary a creek do I find that ain't crawling with Chinks."

Many like him had plodded over the Sierras from California to try fresh ground. Tall haggard Comstock, Old Pancake, who had been a fur trader in Canada, illustrated the need for the Good Book's disapproval of evil concupiscence. Yet cool Eilley kept him cool while she faced down the Irish, Pete O'Reilly and Pat McLaughlin, until she got on with them as well as she did with the Scots, Morrison, Henderson and Bowers. Plato, Bishop, Yount, Knight and Rogers, all ate her food whenever they laid off work for a day, and she mothered them with a decent reserve. A woman was of consequence among fifty men, though they were but a fraction of the jostling crowd she expected. By day they shook, in what they called rockers and long toms, the decomposed outcroppings which freshets had jumbled down from the Sun Peak seven or eight miles up the

canyon. In the evening they sat smoking their pipes, watching to the east the fire by an Indian wickiup, listening to the Chinamen who played on taut strings and sang in their huts to the west of the store. Though any day the gold might emerge from under Eilley's monuments, these provokingly slow miners were content to hoard mere grains of yellow dust in phials, while they suspected one another of every deviltry.

In December Ethan Grosch started across the valley with a youth named Bucke on an unknown mission to California, but near the summit of the Sierras he froze his feet and, like his brother, died. Eilley had but rallied from that blow of fate when she heard that George Brown, a farmer of Carson Valley who had agreed to help Ethan, had been shot in the back at the Gravelly Ford on the Humboldt while on his way east for an equally unknown purpose. "It's weird, weird," Mrs. Ellis said. In Eilley's crystal the pillar now looked black as crape. She reveled in the weirdness.

2

In the spring she went on her burro to Genoa and procured from Judge Childs, who had opened a court there, her second proper divorce. She charged desertion, telling the judge how Mr. Cowan had gone away with the other sinful Saints in wanton defiance of her, and

it was plain to him in ten minutes that she had been deserted. If a lady wanted to be free from a damned Mormon, she could be accommodated. Cheered anew, Eilley moved on to her cabin in Washoe Valley. She had agreed to do some washing for the men during the summer, in return for their working her ground. Every week, with a pannier on each side of her donkey, she made the long round-trip to Gold Canyon, for, since water was scarce and hard in Johntown, she took the clothes to the hot spring on her ranch. Before long she got a mule and a wagon to lighten her work. On her high cheeks the color deepened as she laughed to herself with the secret comfort of her peep-stone while she rubbed underwear that had clung to a body all winter. When her gold had built her city, she would remain the same unaffected lady at the center of a renewed world.

During the spring, prospectors working in Six Mile Canyon had run into trouble when they neared its head. Their rockers had clogged with a dark-colored mineral which, on account of its weight, had been difficult to separate from the gold. They had argued about it over her bacon or stewed rabbit. How could they get rid of it? Meditating upon her crystal Eilley had perceived that it was imperfect, that in the center flecks befogged it, that a vapor drifted through the glass. When she went to Johntown the men, thinking her word lucky, not knowing on what she depended, would ask her advice.

It worried her that the vapor might distort her counsel, and more that she could see through it no great free mass of gold erupting to astound them, nor indeed any yellow whatever, only white.

"Eight dollars to-day," one would remark; "which way will I work to-morrow?"

"North," she would reply, "to the north."

Northward was the general direction up the creek bed which they would have taken anyway. She must afford them a patent proof of her infallibility, for rising steadily, they grew dejected when many a day a miner could not clean up a dollar. When two of the men had cut her final crop of hay, she packed and went to John-town for another winter of suspense. There Snowshoe Thompson, a young blond Norwegian, brought mail and express over the Sierras when no one else could get through. On the first snowshoes known in that region, he ran across the mountains without an overcoat, with nearly a hundredweight on his back, sleeping by the fire of a dead stump or under a ledge, and eating, while he ran by day, dried beef, sausage and crackers which he carried in his flannel shirt. After November Snowshoe was the only contact with the outside world. In Johntown he boarded with Mrs. Cowan.

"Thompson," she began one day in December, "I wish you'd see if you can get me a peep-stone the next time you go down to Sacramento."

"What is a peep-stone?"

"A ball of glass like an egg." As long as she was asking, Eilley would demand a new one far better than the old. "To be a good one it should be clear. I have one, but it's old and cloudy and round. I want you to find me a clear one."

"What's it good for? What use do you make of it?"

"I can find out all manner of things with it," she announced with growing stateliness. "If anything be stolen, I can find the thief and what he stole," she let herself go once she had begun to tell what she had told so few before. "I can foretell what's to come to pass. I can see the faces of the living and the dead. If somebody be missing, I can find him. I can see hidden treasure, and I can see rich ore deep in the ground." It strengthened her to voice her powers.

"Why don't you find a real mine?"

"What I now want a good peep-stone for," Eilley became more confidential, "is to find a mine I've seen in my old one. It's the richest mine in the world, and at no great distance from here, but I can't exactly make out all the surroundings."

"The richest mine in the world?"

"Richer than any in California or," she added, "in Ophir."

"Well," he laughed, "I'll look for your peep-stone."

That emboldened her to divulge her second sight to

others, who she had feared hitherto would profane it, and she gave a sitting now and then before her crystal—to the awed Pete O'Reilly among the first. Three days later he cut into more of the dark and puzzling mineral which glittered with spangles of free gold. Though the gold he recovered amounted to but thirty dollars, he swore by the peep-stone. Then Joe Webb, from whom a quantity of gold-dust had been stolen, came for her help, and Eilley, after a dignified gaze, declared she beheld a Mexican. Seizing the likeliest Mexican, who denied the theft, the boys told him that the peep-stone never lied and whipped him until he confessed and led them to the sack buried under a small cedar in Nigger Ravine half-way up the canyon. Her reputation spread apace.

Alone with this new reputation, however, Eilley had qualms. Again she saw a child, two children, but she wondered if it might be a thought in her own head and not a true vision, and anyway a child would have to wait now on her prosperity. Then she discovered that her ball was a trifle flattened, and tried looking into it endwise. A fleck in it promptly expanded into an immense body of ore, blinding as the Great Salt Lake. Tracing the vein upward, she made out the surface ground, a steep hillside with sage-brush untouched, rather typical, to be sure, of the whole region. The clouded spots in the crystal mixed what might have been

more definite features of the landscape. With the new peepstone which the mail-carrier would bring, she could clear up this uncertainty and that about the children. "Farther up the canyon," she told the men, "farther north."

When Snowshoe Thompson returned, he had no new peep-stone for her. "I visited all the stores in town," he said, "and in a good many they laughed at me. When I told them what a peep-stone was like and how it was used, they laughed until the tears ran down their cheeks. But I was bound to find one if it was to be had in the town, so I went to all the hardware stores, all the jewelry stores, and all the stores where they kept any kind of glassware. I thought I might find what I wanted in some out-of-the-way place, but I couldn't. My wife is English and says she's seen peep-stones in England."

All the stores in Sacramento could not furnish what Eilley needed! She would do with what she had. On that cold night she opened the Good Book as the pages fell. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear," she read; "Thou shalt forget thy shame of thy youth . . . for thy Maker is thy husband." She did not remember ever reading those comforting words before. "And I will make thy windows of agate, and thy gates of carbuncles." In the morning with those carbuncles still in her head, though she did not know quite what they were,

she got out a jar of sage-brush honey, in which wild hyacinths, lupins and buttercups were mingled, and gave it to her boarders for their hot cakes.

In the ravine the prospectors worked on as much as they could where the wind from the west whirled the snow from the slopes. One miner had sent to Dick Killaly, an assayer in San Francisco, samples of the black mineral; but Snowshoe Thompson brought word that the amiable Killaly had been found shot in bed. A sudden death like that always uplifted Eilley; she would foretell one herself when she dared. Jack Bishop washed fifteen cents' worth of gold out of a panful of dirt from a large broad-topped mound covered with snow, and he, Old Virginia, Alec Henderson and Jack Yount took up four new claims near those that had belonged to the Grosch brothers.

"North," Eilley lied, "I can see the earth full of yellow." Late in the spring she delayed her return to Washoe Valley. The canyons crept with deep-trodden trails like those of sheep. In May Comstock, Plato, Bowers, Knight and Rogers staked out a fifth claim fifty feet wide as far up as the others, and a few days later Rogers, unable to pay his board bill, made over to Mrs. Cowan his interest in ten feet next that of Bowers. This, she was sure at last, was what she had seen in her peep-stone. Now in her dreams at night she would curtsy to Queen Victoria.

"Your Majesty," she would say, "I am Eilley Orum, princess of Washoe. I have my own palace there by my lake. I was but a highland girl, but now I'm as good as any. You must come and see me some time."

L. S. Bowers, Sandy they called him, had come from Missouri several years before as a teamster. Clear-faced with a ruffle of beard waving around his chin, he was slow and portentous of speech, a slender naive fellow of perhaps twenty-six who would loiter to discuss with Eilley his claim next to hers while she washed the dishes.

"Pat McLaughlin and Pete O'Reilly found some of that there black rock to-day," he said one evening in June; "they was just saying it must be lead, and old Comstock come up on his pony and says they was on his ground. So they give him half the claim. They've sent some of the stuff below for an assay."

In Eilley's brain suddenly stratified layers and contacts, red, brown, blue, gray, smeared here and there with yellow, seemed merged with split prisms of green. "Our claim," she said, "will do us more good than theirs will them."

In the turmoil of the next few days, men, shapes and shadows were distorted in Eilley's faculties as if in concave mirrors. Figures crunched past her window, lowering their voices. She understood little of what the incoherent Sandy or others tried to explain. A meeting was held to draw up mining rules for the Flowery

Diggings. Another meeting declared grievances against the Mormons of eastern Utah. Thus the repression of the winter found gloriously solemn expression.

3

On the last day of June two gentlemen named James Walsh and Joseph Woodworth arrived in Johntown from Grass Valley, California. The queer samples of O'Reilly and McLaughlin, they said, had been assayed three days before. The ore was silver worth over a thousand dollars a ton. Silver! The treasure of Potosi and Montezuma! Only twelve years before, Carson County had been part of Mexico. Silver! The crystal defective with vapor had foretold that the wealth would be not yellow but white. Eilley Orrum kept her head. For seventeen years, for more than two hundred intolerable moons, she had known that the good, good luck insured by the May dew thrown over her left shoulder on the Cannon moor would bring her wealth and a handsome husband. Now that she had found her fortune, she could as certainly have a child. At thirty-two she would begin to live.

Nobody knew how much or how little the strike would mean. A Mexican from Sonora said he had warned some of the prospectors that they were throwing away two dollars in silver for every dollar in gold they

got. Mrs. Ellis said the Grosch brothers knew it was silver that choked their rockers. The reports of the strike merely trickled over the range to skeptical California. Until more ore was assayed, no one would know what any claim might be worth. Alva Gould let his claim go for four hundred and fifty dollars, and ran down the canyon shouting in his liquor, "God damme, I fooled the Goddam Californian." Pat McLaughlin sold out for thirty-five hundred dollars to a Mr. George Hearst of San Francisco. A few men struggled in over the passes, gabbling of diorite and andesite. Any pile of brush, boulders and dried hides with a crooked stove-pipe made a hovel. In a quickly fashioned arastra a miner would work the ore as he hacked it out of what he sanguinely called a shaft or a tunnel.

Near her cabin, Eilley, her mind alive with silver and scarlet, agate and carbuncles, could see a man stirring the ore in an arastra as if he were making a great pudding. Round and round the horse dragged the beam which bore down on a greenstone paved circle two slabs of granite which ground the rock into a watery mush within a boundary wall of granite blocks like tombstones. Still with only her Maker for her husband, she cooked on from morning to night. By fittingly mystic processes the subjects of her boarding-house would soon extract for her from the rock more wealth than the gold of Sheba. The huge red sandstone hump

where Sandy Bowers and the others were drilling had been named Gold Hill. By the middle of the month an abortive constitutional convention met in Genoa to organize a state, her state.

From the transporting tumult Eilley drove her mule one day back to the peace of Washoe Valley. Among the meadow-larks she contemplated the quiet mountains for a few hours as she arranged with her neighbor for the cutting of her hay and grain. In the distance she liked the tumult and at hand the tranquillity. This domain she would always preserve. Soon all the world would come in coaches to her mansion to behold the fine lady of the American West. She would visit Scotland in her grandness and tour Europe, but year in and year out the world would have to roll to her here where she had gained her goal. Ladies would sink their feet into her velvet carpets, drink her tea, and inquire how she had found her wealth. She would but point to her old clouded peep-stone, retired on a silver platter within a cabinet of ivory, for by then she would have a hundred clear new crystals from Edinburgh. Under the canyon she could see with the naked eye, while she watered her mule in Washoe Valley fifteen miles away, a cube of black a mile deep to be cut, molded and refined into radiant white. For ages people would talk of her powers and of her line, which would live on to the end of eternity.

That night in Johntown more unkempt men besieged her cabin for food. As yet there was but little ore in sight, but California, they said, was petering out. She, she had graciously revived their luck. Her heart expanded hourly in the attempt to take care of more boarders, who paid her well. Her crystal and the snail before it had brought her this triumph. The snail? E. H.? Those curliques might have been S. B. She had thought so at the time. With the bishop and Alec behind her, and in the rush of this strange life, she had almost forgotten the reprobate snail. Her next man must have S. B. for initials. For the ten thousandth time since she had left Cannon never again to wash any dishes, that night she washed the dishes—with a deep and tender emotion.

4

In Johntown Eilley saw and heard a Mr. Horace Greeley from New York fairly surge with great thoughts on the porch of the store. "I believe that God never made anything without a purpose," he declared; "but the wilderness I have crossed is certainly worthless for agriculture. Unless there shall prove to be great mineral wealth there, it has been created in vain; but if, in the workings of Divine Providence, vast treasure houses are revealed, as I believe they will be, then, my friends, it will take the labor of a hundred thousand California

miners a hundred thousand years even to prospect it. In Carson Valley," he added, "the vegetable food of one million people can easily be grown." Eilley had long known that the combination of bare canyons and fertile valleys was ideal.

Sandy Bowers, who took little stock in Horace Greeley, naturally talked with her a great deal now that his ten feet and hers had become of such moment. Spare, boyish, unlettered, given to roistering, he conferred with her gravely before he made any move. "Would you sell it?" he asked her. "Pat McLaughlin's claim fetched a fair price."

"Sell it? What's thirty-five hundred dollars? We'll hold on to it," she counseled him. "It was red Gold Hill I saw in my peep-stone. Hosea and Ethan Grosch knew the ore was silver, and they both died. What we must watch against now is murder," she declared.

Pliant Sandy heeded her gruesome ardor, and kept their claims, while she mused on life and death in her flecked ball. The life in it was immediate, the death seemed vague and remote, and the main life in it was the face of Sandy Bowers. It troubled her a little that she had once seen there too the face of Alec whom, like the bishop, she had tried and found wanting. She was aware that she had always seen what she wanted to see, and now she wanted very much to dwell on the countenance of Sandy. For the first time Mrs. Cowan who had been

Mrs. Hunter seemed about to fall in love; she watched carefully for symptoms that could be depended upon. While the miners collected ore for the first real shipment over the mountains, the summer waned.

On the last Sabbath in August Eilley gave a party. Louisa Ellis was the only other woman there. Once, before the advent of Elder Hyde, that intrepid lady had married a man and a girl by writing out a contract, but the marriage had not endured long. Lately she had been an ardent supporter of Eilley's occult power. To the party the boarders all came, feverish from another week of digging. The liquor supply, none too plentiful in the increasing camp, had to be distributed and consumed rather informally on even such an occasion of good fellowship. Most of the guests had whisky straight which they brought with them. Now sedate, now sprightly, Eilley kept them well within the conventions of moistened decorum, but conversation lagged. At the climax of the evening, however, she and Sandy shone together when he opened a bottle of champagne sent him by an assayer in California. She liked the very way in which he manipulated the cork, the awkward grace with which he served her guests as far as one bottle would reach, the buoyancy and depth with which he proposed a toast to the health of the hostess. In that oblong little room among the crowd of drinkers, Eilley grew more conscious of the proximity of a new love.

Everything about him pleased her, even the rich smell of a working miner. She did not remember taking pleasure in that smell before. They had been content to be static, but now good cheer ruptured the thick atmosphere until the wit and revelry became brilliant enough to lead to a great finale. When the liquor was gone Sandy lost his shyness and began to respond so that, while the guests shambled out into the cool air, dispersing to their various holes to sleep as best they might, he boldly remained at her side.

"Good evening to you, Mrs. Cowan," they said respectfully, and "Good night to you, Sandy," they added. The boys had guilelessly coupled them.

She looked at him with a long-restrained tenderness. He was sober enough now though exhilarated in the candle-light. She longed to flatter him, to make him feel the man he was. "I thank you for the toast," she said.

"I wish I'd of had another bottle," he replied.

"You did as well with one as any other man would have done with two."

"The next time we'll have all the champagne they can drink," he boasted.

She drew back a little and, to change the drift of his thought, started again suggestively, "I like to have my friends about me."

"Aye," he agreed, "we'll give another party."

"I was glad," she said, "for sharing the prosperity."

"We'll share more," he declared, following satisfactorily, "all you want."

All she wanted? She wanted a man to complete the nobility of her fruition, she needed the young Scot before her who was no Saint, her lack compelled her on. "When?" she asked bashfully.

"We'll get married," he blurted, "whenever you say." She retreated modestly as he advanced on those clumsy legs of a teamster. "Whenever you say," he repeated stupidly, watching her.

She had reached the wall when he grasped her, lifted her from the tiptoes on which she stood in expectant readiness, and kissed her with enough relish and energy to satisfy her mood. It was an honest kiss that all but flattened her against the wall, and her simple yielding to it was more honest still.

"We'll go to the minister to-morrow," she said happily.

"Aye, if there be a minister."

"There is one, I know him," she assured her Sandy firmly.

"And we'll have another party," he added. She promised, as she kissed him, again, good night.

In the rabble of Gentiles, apostate Mormons, desperadoes, and law-abiding citizens, there was one mineralogically inclined minister. Some said he was a

reformed faro dealer. Eilley had discovered him at the store. Late the next afternoon she and Sandy went to the Reverend Bennett, technically a Methodist. His words, pronounced in the room above Spofford Hall's store, were less sonorous than those of the Saintly elders who had married Eilley before, but as effective. After the ceremony he scribbled a certificate to show that he had duly united Lemuel Sanford Bowers and Mrs. Ellison Cowan in holy monogamy. The Scots in the camp insisted on lifting the bride over the threshold of her cabin when they returned from the wedding. That had been overlooked after her former ceremonies, and the oversight had doubtless made the spirits under the threshold malevolent. By sundown she had spread a tasty collation for their friends, more numerous than the night before, and in the evening the whole camp gave the bride and groom a rousing shivaree, clanging drills on shovels, aiming rocks at her door-step, shooting their derringers. It was a popular union, and the party was more uproarious than the first. Not until midnight could Mr. and Mrs. Bowers settle down calmly in Eilley's comfortable cabin. As surely as she had found the silver, she could have a child.

CHAPTER FIVE

1

ON THE morning after the marriage Mr. Walsh and the lascivious Old Pancake left for San Francisco with the first considerable shipment of ore packed on six mules. Though it was not even Bowers ore, their departure reinforced Eilley's hopes and plans now that she had a clean young husband. Leaving Scotland for America, she had declared to herself that she would not stop until she came to a mountain, and here the mountain was about to provide her with unbounded silver. Her reinvigorated conviction that she could do *all* she had ever set out to do beatified her on that morning after her third wedding night. In that month of waiting so intense as to be sublime, a single street of tents and shacks defined itself through her embryo metropolis. While she hesitated about announcing its name as Caledonia, some of the miners, carousing with Finney on the steep slant of the Sun Peak, accidentally broke a bottle of whisky and baptized the spot Virginia City in honor of him. That name could never endure.

Then, with the ore sold for a dollar and a half a pound, Comstock returned and sold out to Walsh for six thousand dollars, and gave the lode itself his own name. "Comstock the whoremonger!" Eilley exclaimed to Mrs. Ellis who sympathized. With the money he seduced the wife of a migrant Mormon, and then bought her from the provoked husband, but unable to keep her from running away, he had to offer a reward for her return as if she were a dog or a nigger. A Mr. Donald Davidson of San Francisco, with an adequate sense of his own value, renamed the Sun Peak after himself.

Eilley received and weighed offers for the Bowers claim. "Mr. Bowers has great faith in the lode," she would tell an inquirer; "Mr. Bowers has decided not to sell." At the end of September she was once more disappointed. For a few days she thought wildly of an endless succession of husbands, thrown off one after the other, until she got what she must have.

Amid another week of peculiar torment toward the end of October, the wind from under a southwestern cloud like the wing of a bird blew for three days. Then the snow smothered down over the valley, spitting into the ravine. Awakened after midnight by a pounding on their door, Sandy let in two boys who had strained their hearts plunging over the pass, and who asked lodging.

"Heard of this here gold strike," they said rather shamefacedly, "and thought we'd try our luck."

"It's silver," Eilley corrected them.

"Silver?" they groaned.

"Millions of silver," she reassured them, "better than gold." Half-numb she brought water for their chilblained feet, heated coffee, and got out a Washoe robe of hareskins for them to sleep in by her stove, while Sandy gave them each a ferocious drink. Warmed and grateful, though still trembling, they yawned, smiled bashfully and looked likably debauched. A son of her own by the bishop in that first year at Nauvoo would have been their age by now. Their coming so upset her that she found it hard to fall asleep again while the sleet gasped against the window. Then gradually she realized that with her third husband she had justified herself. Though it was almost dawn before she slept, by seven she was cooking for the boys and Sandy the most magnificent breakfast her larder could yield, heaping it on the table with that quietude which comes only from royal forebears. By nine in her foolhardiness she was clambering through the snow to tell Mrs. Ellis and confirm symptoms.

"Plenty of fresh milk and butter and eggs and the green things coming up in your garden." Louisa Ellis was delighted. "Yes, June's the best time I always say, and what does Sandy think of you now?"

As yet Mr. Bowers thought nothing because he knew nothing about it, but Eilley conveyed to Louisa that

his joy was commensurate with her virtuous performance, and so she talked on for a full hour without being once aware that ever before had a woman conceived. "Mr. Bowers," she concluded, arising to go, "will have his friends in this evening. Mr. Bowers always likes his friends around him." Louisa would come.

Of the party and her expectation, Eilley informed the dumfounded Sandy after her return. For the gathering that night two bottles of champagne hardly sufficed, but there was need to be provident for other celebrations were coming. Overnight, men had become to Eilley things of singular merit, now that she could vaunt herself before their general unfruitfulness. A party on Friday and another on Saturday followed that on Thursday, and by Saturday the men, freed from their inhibitions by her ardor, were dancing, when she and Louisa had other partners, with one another as they did in the saloon. They barely refrained from bringing in the Indian mahalies. For Eilley three parties in that week were no strain.

2

Impatient to go on with the mining, the camp had to accept the hardest winter it had known. Those who had huts roofed them with boards and earth, and those who had none, including the two boys, slept in pits overlaid with sticks or in their rudimentary adits where

water fell on their foreheads. To be on the ground ready for the mineral accouchement in the spring was good fortune enough. When they could tread on the snow crust in the morning, the men shot antelope or mountain sheep, but before the long cold spell broke up, Eilley was feeding her boarders jack-rabbit straight. Yet the tunnels multiplied until there were hundreds above the Devil's Gateway, to the pock mark of stones and charcoal which was all that remained of the Grosch smelting furnace. Porphyritic horses, masses of rock fallen in the vein, troubled the miners. "In the spring," the camp and Eilley promised themselves, "in the spring!"

Early in March Gold Hill began to feel life when John L. Moore arrived through the snow with a stock of blankets, flour, shovels and assorted drinkables packed on mules. In a long narrow tent he laid the first carpet in Eilley's city, and outside he raised the first American flag. For a bar the side board of an emigrant wagon rested on stakes driven in the ground. A week later a rival opened the Astor House with eighteen bunks in one room. Eilley, creating a mine, a town and a child all at once, had plenty to do. As more adventurers broke through the snow, she thawed out frozen toes, treated them with Indian concoctions and darned woolen socks. No work was too hard for her now that with a Missourian she was proving wherein two Saints had been at fault. A prospector named

Savage asserted that the Bowers claim encroached on his, and fearing not only for her mine but for Sandy's life, she made him build a stone barricade and guard it with thirty armed men, a private army almost regal.

In April she saw the first pony express from the east dash by the gulch. Every incident enhanced the import of what she was doing for the world. The second rider carried through the snow to San Francisco her order for baby clothes and a crib. The rush to the new camp began. Hundreds of loaded mules, sheep, cattle, were driven up to her city. To solemnize her canyon's parturition wise men from the west came bearing special gifts—billiard and monte tables, dice and spinning markers. The Washoe mines, for after all it was her Washoe and not Comstock or Virginia City that captured the western imagination, were called Ophir, Kentuck, Gould and Curry, Crown Point, Belcher and Chollar-Potosi, names as romantic to Eilley as Tarshish. At the trial of the Savage case the jury, moved by her watchful Providence and some money wisely distributed, assigned the claim by a majority verdict to Sandy.

After the first forty tons of ore from the Ophir, dispatched by mule-train to San Francisco, had yielded one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, mining was halted in May when Piutes burned Williams Station to the north and killed several men. Eilley feared she would have to send Sandy to punish the savages, but

later decided he would not be necessary. While Virginia City was put under martial law, a furious company, which included the two boys Eilley had lodged, rode off to sack the Piute villages, capture young squaws and ponies, and otherwise wage righteous battle. Eilley waved to them until they were out of sight up the canyon.

"Don't excite yourself," Mrs. Ellis pleaded with her; "you need all your strength."

"I'm keeping my strength," she declared, ready to sharpen her courage on the next development.

In a week the news came that near Pyramid Lake sixty miles away the Indians under Chief Winnemucca had slaughtered half that company and Major Ormsby, its commander. Eilley's two protégés were among the dead. A mahalie told her that the Williams brothers had seized and raped two twelve-year-old Piute girls, shutting them in a cellar. In the terror of that debacle, two miners stopped at her cabin before breakfast to tell Sandy about Sam Brown of Texas, who had swaggered into Virginia City credited with having killed thirteen men. Early that morning he had added the fourteenth to his fame. A puny bar-room lounge had referred slightly to his female parent. Offended at this humorous, even admiring phrase on every tongue, Sam without a word had wound an apelike arm about the weakling. Holding him easily, as a catamount might

hold a mourning dove, the big man had driven a sheath-knife twice into the dissolute little body.

"Turned it twice, Maltese-wise in his guts," the miner said.

"Shh, the missus," the other hushed the vivid detailer as they went out the door.

"Flung him and left him bleeding on the floor," she still heard; "he was just breathing in his blood under the bar when they found 'em, and Sam Brown snoring on a billiard-table." Even at such contortions in the entity which her peep-stone had brought to life, Eilley contained herself strong-stomached. It was as if a mirage like a dragon were becoming joints and sinews.

3

To rest and bring forth the creation of her body she went to Washoe Valley. There among the score of brown cabins put up by the Saints and their successors, she settled again in June. An itinerant doctor from the new Carson City ten miles away waited at a neighboring ranch. Mrs. Hawkins, reciprocating for the attentions at the birth of Wally MacDougall who was so much less important, palpitated around her. "Mr. Bowers insisted I should come here," Eilley said; "nothing is too good for Mr. Bowers."

"And nothing's too good for you, Eilley," he had

declared heartily. He had left the mine in charge of his new superintendent, after receiving eight thousand dollars from a shipment of ore.

In her prosperity Eilley knew that destiny, so wisely good to its chosen vessel, would give her a son. Strong in her expectation, ready for pain, jubilant when it began, she lay in the bed two days and a night toward the end of the month until the son came. In labor, energy and fortitude Eilley always reveled. The old mahalie with pitch eyes and furrowed red cheeks under her blue bandanna brought water from the warm pool for the doctor, and by the candle-light the son for whom Eilley had endured eighteen years lay washed and dressed, tiny as a jewel, beside her. She had decided on his names one zero day in January. Two names from the Good Book she must have, one from the New Testament, one from the Old, one plain, one a treasure. Beryl, onyx, sapphire, none of those would do. Jasper! John Jasper Bowers was the name she uttered as Sandy tucked around her the coarse blanket that felt like satin.

Fortitude! Eilley needed it. John Jasper was puny, crying an infinitesimal cry for which she could find no remedy. As soon as she could, she returned to the gulch, where the summer turned as hot as the winter had been cold, and where, unable to hire even a squaw, she was overwhelmed by the tasks before her. The rooms had not been cleaned for a month, the dried mud had

crumbled between the logs, and the wind blew sand through chinks which she tried to stop with rags. The smell of ants, rats and mice overrunning her possessions oppressed her, while the baby cried more than ever. The local doctor, preoccupied with his mining claim, prescribed ineffectual doses.

"Try this," Louisa Ellis would urge, bringing a syrup; "this ought to help him." Her former boarders brought presents and told Eilley humorous news.

Letting them admire the baby, she would finger the gold nuggets like parched peas or the beaker hammered from the first Comstock silver assayed, exclaim over them, put them aside, and try anew to pacify her first born. What good were people? A German named Otto Esche, her visitors went right on telling her, had imported fifteen Bactrian camels on the schooner *Caroline E. Foote* from the Amoor River in Asia for a camel express between California and the Great Salt Lake; wouldn't that be wonderful? A Mr. Enslow declared, they said, that he had seen an alligator in cold Pyramid Lake. A rail-splitter named Abraham Lincoln was running for President. She could get rid of them only when she covered the window with a blanket to keep out the sun, and announced that the baby must go to sleep now.

"Looks too ailing," she could hear them say outside. "Poor Eilley," she even heard Louisa say, "seems like

she won't keep him long." She would keep him for ever—but he would not sleep.

"You must put up a house," she told Sandy in desperation, "more suitable than this, and while they're building it, I'll try Washoe Valley again."

There John Jasper cried on until she was beside herself. By the hour she fanned away blue-bottle flies, gnats and mosquitoes. Twenty times a night she would get up to attend to this child of destiny. While the coyotes howled on the hillside, she sang new lullabies learned from the mahalie, looked in the candle-light up at cobwebs in the rafters, and worried about Sandy at the mine. In a fortnight she recrossed the bare crest to Gold Hill where Sandy had hired carpenters, now numerous enough, to erect a merry cottage which, he had sent word, was already inhabitable. The framework they had propped on a little wall in front and on the bare ground at the rear. Below the railing on the porch, scrollwork, deemed chaste but really wanton, hinted of the Bowers position in the community. Narrow clapboards, neat window and door cases and transom all fit jauntily at first, though shortly the whole structure teetered on the hillside setting everything permanently aslant. Here John Jasper had colic worse than ever, and she could do nothing for his pain. She longed to see some luster in his eyes, for the ball so long ago had shown her a grasshopper melting into a baby that crowed.

Eilley's riches, like bees that she could not hive, swarmed around her, for the Bowers' twenty feet had paid ten thousand dollars in July. The district's first steam whistle tooted pertly, and the stamps of the first mill crashed into action almost above her head. It was as if her camp were crowing over her. The miners ravaged the geometric hills, strewing dumps like varicolored aprons before their holes and squandering their loot. Sandy gloriously grub-staked the importunate, set up drinks for any crowd, ordered tools and machinery, gave right and left his painful signature, under her watchful guidance. With a corner of her mind she even enjoyed the jamboree. Jewelers, barbers, tinsmiths, gunsmiths, dressmakers, butchers, bakers and thirty general stores competed enthusiastically in her city, while twenty saloons, their ceilings already blackened by tobacco smoke, and their floors greasy with filth, kept the men jovial. The International Hotel, and what every one boasted of as one of the best-arranged and snuggest theaters on the Pacific coast, had been constructed. Yet in Virginia City with two thousand people there were still only about a hundred ladies, most of whom lived in two rows of white cabins on a street of their own below the main business section. Below them lay Chinatown with its odorous dried ducks and salamanders, its punk and opium; farther down camped the Washoes, licking up refuse from tables above.

Without phrases for her longings, Eilley knew that she would have to repattern this upheaved region with her own methodical respectability. She needed sequestered ease in which the world would have to court her affability and benevolence. She would advertise herself by touring through the kingdoms of Europe, displaying modish finery, mingling with the élite, and exhibiting John Jasper in Cannon. Then she would reside with such ostentation as she could manage on the country estate she had so wisely selected. Living in Gold Hill, above the shop as it were, was noisy and common. She would go to Virginia City for urban pleasures, but society would appreciate her more if she were more secluded.

That future like foolish fire glowed along the marshes of her consciousness as she tended her son who still gained no weight. Then amid the havoc of pillage and building, he definitely caught cold, perhaps from the acrid dust that swirled everywhere. Ointments and nostrums, the meager skill of the doctor from Carson City, the experience of Mrs. Ellis, all availed nothing. Sickly, fragile, as he was, he lasted after that but a day. In a day the first-born she had awaited so many years was dead. One day less than two months she had him, and then he died. In the new graveyard among stones and sage-brush on an unmined spur in the gulch they buried him. While the lumps were tamped down to keep out the coyotes, Eilley and Sandy stood in coura-

geous desolation. To the south a far black ridge crouched beneath the sunlight. "We'll take him over to Washoe before long, Sandy," Eilley tried to console herself through her tears; "he'll rest better there above our real home." Sandy choked, and as best they could they gave each other comfort.

4

In San Francisco a reaction against the Comstock set in and became almost a panic, for only the Ophir, Mexican and Bowers' properties were paying. Yet the proceeds of the Bowers' ore were more than ever, fifteen thousand dollars in August. At her ranch a few days after the funeral, Eilley stared half-heartedly into her peep-stone, in which silver and death had blended, but which for months she had been too flustered to consult. More silver, a stone mansion four-square, sunny skies, a sense of being at one with a surrounding paradise—she could make nothing of it all. She was putting her own unformulated thoughts into the glass. What did second sight amount to when her first-born son was dead?

"You must put up a mill," she told Sandy.

Under the guidance of solicitous friends and ambitious contractors, he started a fine twenty-stamp mill to be run by a sixty-five-horse-power steam-engine. Crushing twenty tons of ore every day, at even a hundred

dollars a ton it could pour into their hands a million dollars a year if the ore held out. Eilley's energy found an outlet in deciding every question. Once to relieve the tension and give herself diversion, she went with Sandy to the snug little theater, opened by a traveling company from Salt Lake City with *Toodles* and *The Swiss Swains*, both of which saddened her the more.

Because Sandy, but a teamster for all his having struck it rich, could hardly follow the milling processes when they were explained to him, let alone direct them, they had to get some one to superintend the mill. Lonesome as well as resourceful, Eilley thought of the Livingstones. In California squinty Jim had quit wheel-making, and after several years in a small stamp-mill, had been put in charge of it. He and Betsy had impended since the first news of the strike, but, after trials in getting something good in California, had prudently considered a job in hand worth all manner of promising claims. Now Eilley wrote them to come, for he could superintend the venture and keep that much pay in the family. One moment she was sorry, and the next glad, that Betsy had not been with her during John Jasper's short heartrending life.

On the day she sent the letter Eilley became both naturally and preternaturally aware that she was going to have another child. A voice clear as an angelic annunciation spoke in her slightly deaf left ear. "Fear

not;" it said in words she recalled from Genesis, "thou shalt have this child also." She sought the passage and skimmed over the dire rhythms. "And Rachel travailed, and . . . the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also . . . as her soul was in departing, (for she died) . . . she called his name Ben-oni . . . and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave." She could not and would not die when she had so much exaltation yet to achieve, though she would be proud to die for another son—or a daughter. She should have read only the promise. There are many extraneous things in the Good Book.

With a new zest she gazed once more into her peep-stone. In front of a house, trees and flowers, a shroud set off capriciously the graceful jets of a fountain. She shuddered and closed her eyes to revel in the roses, pinks, sweet-peas and purple asters that rioted before her inner sight. She must smell those flowers in her own arms and clip their stems herself. She must build her palace. That evening, with her chin on her clasped hands and her elbows on the window-sill while she waited for Sandy who was late in coming from the mine, she watched the Northern Lights play about the dome above the canyon, now stabbing, now crooking and looping, now rocketing with many a ricochet. It was as if the very pole were trying adequately to hint of her right-ful magnificence.

Sandy's hob-nailed heels clicked on the pebbles as, holding his liquor well, he descended the incline. From his pocket he drew a paper showing that the mine had produced twenty-six thousand dollars in September.

"Quarter of a million dollars a year," she interpreted the figures to him.

"Money to throw at the birds." He was dazed. "What'll we do with it?"

With a holy cheerfulness almost malicious she read him the passage from Genesis.

"There's no cause for you dying," he protested.

"No, I mayn't," she admitted; "if I could go back to Cannon with this baby——"

"You might, and you shall—in the summer."

That so encouraged her that she continued, "And we could build a new house over in Washoe, a real mansion."

"That we could," he agreed. "Diamonds, anything you want, Eilley," he offered in the warmth of his liquor, "you shall have."

"I'll have my diamonds in good time," she accepted them.

The next morning while hoar frost, a pogonip the Indians called it, covered every gnarled bole of the sagebrush she conferred with a stone-cutter, a Scot with a countenance like a love-apple who had arrived in Gold Hill to take advantage of an active market for head-

pieces. The three rode to Washoe, climbed the low spur north of the cabin, and examined the granite. "They could quarry it here," was the verdict; "I know just the man for ye, in California, him and his men, from the old country where they do cutting as is cutting." Word that a Comstock millionaire was thinking of a fine home brought them, at once, a master mason and a crew of quarrymen. The mason drew a house like a steel engraving that pleased Eilley instantly, and the quarrymen set to blasting the granite and chiseling it into blocks. After an open winter, spring came early. The mine paid and paid. Jim, who had come with Betsy and their two boys, was managing the mill which steadily stamped the ore. There was no end to the silver.

"We'll journey to Europe while the mansion is building," Eilley told Sandy; "we'll need things to go in it." Her palace and another child! Her mother had lost one child, and it was better to lose the first than the seventh. She was tireless in her double expectation.

Betsy, listless from the altitude, marveled at her energy. "I'm going to see the Queen," Eilley boasted to her.

"The Queen!" Betsey was impressed as she should be.

"The Queen, wearing my crinoline, with my fan in my hand, and my diamond brooch to catch up the ruching at my neck."

It quite took Betsey's breath away. Mrs. Bowers would outdo the brazen disturbing harlots who dallied over the bonnets at the indiscriminating milliner's in Virginia City. Meanwhile she must give attention to other affairs of her realm. Carson County, she rejoiced, had continually resented being governed from Salt Lake City which still seemed to her the very center of harlotry. Now Mr. John Cradlebaugh, the latest judge at Genoa, was outspoken against the Mormons and for the creation of a new state. Though it was not clear in her mind just what a state was, she was sure that if California could become one soon after the gold-rush, her Washoe certainly deserved to be one now after this greater silver strike. In the end it was only the territory of Nevada, which seemed no name at all, that was separated from Utah in the last days before the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln.

In the spring the huge Ophir stamp-mill, costing a half-million dollars, was constructed some miles north of Eilley's Washoe undertaking. A low wooden bridge was stretched across the lake for interminable ore teams with their jingling bells. Each night at the stables in Gold Hill and Virginia City the sweating mules were rubbed down, curried and fed on choicest hay, oats and barley. Each morning, hitched to strong high wagons specially wrought of iron, ash and hickory by expert California wagon makers, they radiated the pride of the

Comstock. The procession past her gates dignified the more Eilley's restful country seat, the foundations for which were being laid by her countrymen with muscular caresses.

June meant travail. Eilley approached the trial righteously braced to composure. "Fear not; thou shalt have this child also." What if even the "Washoe zephyrs" should batter at her cottage? That promise was equal to any conditions. The best doctor in the camp attended her while she was easily delivered of a girl, and declared he had never seen a more comfortable birth. "There," Eilley thought, "I knew I shouldn't have read so much about Rachel. Sandy will have no need to trouble himself over a pillar for me." She had decided to name her daughter Theresa, after her mother who ought thus to be remembered. For a middle name she gratefully stuck her forefinger at random into the Good Book. "I am glad," she read very much apropos in First Corinthians, "of the coming of . . . Fortunatus," and the next words she changed to suit her case, "for that which was lacking on my part she has supplied, for she has refreshed my spirit." Theresa Fortunatus Bowers was perfectly formed, suckled normally, put on weight as a child should, slept and opened her eyes like wild violets. Within four days after her birth, Old Virginia, the toper for whom the city had been shamelessly named, fell from his horse and fractured his

skull. Doubtless that was the death Eilley had seen in her crystal, so comprehensive were its pictures of coming events. In a couple of weeks she was definitely planning their European tour. Now for Cannon and the Queen!

5

The new governor of the territory, James W. Nye, arrived from New York and Nevada was formally declared organized. It was high time to electrify the populace with the news that the foremost citizens of Gold Hill were going abroad in luxury. The announcement was made with genteel formality. Toward the end of the month Mr. and Mrs. L. Sanford Bowers gave a banquet at the International Hotel. Their guests, chiefly masculine because most of the available ladies were beyond Eilley's pale, were as abundant as their chicken and champagne. When the food, though not the drink, had been consumed, Sandy, more inspired than when he had asked her hand in marriage, insisted on making a speech.

"I've been in this here country among the first that come here," he began amid tremendous applause; "I've had powerful good luck, and I've money to throw at the birds." The birds present applauded more vociferously. "There ain't no chance for a gentleman to spend his coin in this country, and there ain't nothing much to see. So

me and Mrs. Bowers is going to Europe to take in the sights." Sandy paused for breath, the throng cheered, and Eilley merely bowed. "One of the great men of this country," he went on, "was in this country a while back. That was Horace Greeley. I saw him and he didn't look like no great shakes. Outside of him the only great men I've seen in this country is Governor Nye and Old Winemucca. Now me and Mrs. Bowers is going to Europe to see the Queen of England and the other great men of them countries, and I hope ye'll all join in and drink Mrs. Bowers's health. There's plenty of champagne, and money ain't no object."

While the miners howled with joy and Eilley bowed and bowed, the glasses were filled again and again until her health seemed assured to the end of a long fecund life. The banquet was a success to go down in history. The next day the mines on the Comstock were far undermanned for every friend of the free-handed hosts had to see them off in the stage-coach. Some of the friends were still considerably drenched and others had hangovers. Though Eilley in her mansion might give parties more refined, she could never give one of deeper or longer effervescence.

CHAPTER SIX

1

HANK MONK handled the ribbons of the stage-coach that hurled them, as the saying went, over the grade to Lake Tahoe. That summer the road had been somewhat straightened, scraped and filled so that the clattering ascent was less perilous than Horace Greeley had found it. Yet Eilley clasped her infant tightly enough to keep it mewling most of the way. From the deep-grooved shelf in the oblique granite rotting around the manzanita, all the mountain kingdoms of the world seemed ranked tier on tier beyond the valley to the south. In that valley the fields were plaided, like a tartan. She liked the ranges, rhythmic as hymns with rhymes and refrains, better than the squares of hay, potatoes and grain. Those ridges were peopled only with slashes of color and phantoms of shade. To live below such wildness, one had to be tame and neat. Such was the perpetual dilemma of progress. One must trim the formlessness, or not advance in dominion, power and glory.

Folds, chasms, pinnacles, in a formidable, friendly hotchpotch, separated her beloved Washoe from languorous California. She had never before really conceived of what a satisfying barricade lay behind her warm springs. From a high meadow with cattle grazing among a thousand hills, she beheld at last the still indigo of Lake Tahoe. Then she cringed a little at the holy cross of snow on a mountain to the south. A Popish cross like that always made her flinch. God should not misspend Himself on such frippery; but she was loath to upbraid Him. Down a pitiless stone cleft they slid with brakes set to Strawberry. On they hurtled through pines, spruces, tamaracks and the sickly sweet tar-weed, along the American River to Placerville cramped in its V. That stage ride was almost travel enough without Europe. From Sacramento they took the river-boat to San Francisco, then just insinuating itself upon the heights. Wharves, shipping, shops such as in no other city had she dared approach, tickets, consultations about details of her mansion—San Francisco was never afterward very lucid in her memory.

On the packet to Panama, however, she had the placidity in which to think it all over. That is, she had placidity until somewhere along the coast of Mexico squalls put her to bed with nausea; her, and Tessie who was assuredly too small to stand any such commotion. Sandy fortified himself with good rum, and talked with

the other gentlemen aboard about the specie and bullion in the ship's strong boxes. At Panama she was terrified lest Tessie, who had survived, should get malaria or cholera or smallpox. Sandy bought bananas and coconuts, which she tasted gingerly, and before they took ship again at Aspinwall, they ate a good dinner of ham, eggs and fried plantain with milk. It was mainly her stomach that remembered that part of the tour. In the Gulf of Mexico, Scotland and her mother, Paris and her gowns, London and Queen Victoria, once more loomed ahead. Through much tribulation we enter the kingdom of heaven. At New York they soon had their passports, and sailed on the *Caledonia*. Across the Atlantic they had a smooth triumphant voyage. "Where I come from, we have them on the hillside," she would remark to some female fellow passenger, as they inspected the crated goats which the ship carried for fresh milk, or, "Where I come from, the onions grow wild in the springtime."

In her cabin she immersed herself in a copy of Godey's, trying to accustom herself to the Parisian costumes described there. Gagelin's pompadour effect especially suited her taste. A skirt of green silk looped up in two places on each side by white and pink chicories forming ribbon. The front, in the apron style, white satin, decorated with white and red roses. A white and pink bertha rounded behind and beginning in front from the point of the body. White tulle sleeves. A head-dress

of a white and pink chicory on one side, roses on the other, and two large marabou feathers. A charming ball cloak made of quilted satin, white outside and pink inside, with a milk-maid's hood, profusely trimmed with white and pink chicories. All fresh and youthful. She must visit this Mr. Gagelin. Others on board the ship came to know them, Sandy and Eilley, as simple, kindly, important people from those astoundingly prosperous new mines in Nevada territory, on their way to be presented at court. "Such a good baby, too," they all said.

Suddenly, the day before the ship docked at London, God's will ran amuck so swiftly that Eilley in her consternation would have sold her soul to the Devil if she could have been sure of the Devil as a power at hand. She damned herself for her silly confidence in her regained elation. The divine will griped Tessie as if with some obscure blood lust until Tessie, hitherto growing chubbier every day, simply gasped and died. The shroud in the crystal had meant Eilley's daughter.

They landed at London in a drizzle, too stunned to know it was raining. What good now even to go to Cannon? Had a ship been sailing for America that day, they would have straightway engaged passage. Happily for her later equanimity, no passage was obtainable. As Theresa Fortunatus must be buried in Washoe beside John Jasper, they desposited the little body in a vault.

Then they went back to the hotel to sit by the coal fire—to sit—and sit.

2

The bitterness wore itself away. She might have another child. The piñons above her ranch would be bursting with cones by now. The mahalies would be whacking them down, standing lumplike in the resinous smoke of their fires, every now and again crushing shells between pudgy red fingers, crunching sweet waxy kernels which ought to have become piñons themselves. She and Sandy would descend to the fusty back room of the hotel for their tea with bread and bloater paste. Once that very paste had been alive, swimming in a great shoal off her highland coast. Her mother had ten children. She had been wrong to question the ways of the Creator. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord. They had not come to London to sit in the Caledonian Hotel. One day she emboldened Sandy to look at some furniture.

“That’d be comfortable,” she conceded as they inspected a bedstead. Walnut with a rounded headboard, it had clusters of grapes pendulous from its corner posts and its apex. She handled the grapes, so pure, compact and unfermenting. A bureau and a wash-stand went with it, each with a classic marble slab, coolly veined, above the drawers or doors. On each side of the adjust-

able looking-glass of the bureau a bracket was supported by a bunch of grapes. At the top still another cluster hung provocative as mistletoe. "We might find a wash-bowl and pitcher painted to match," she suggested to the lizardlike but obliging clerk. Sure enough, that demand had been foreseen. The master bedroom at Washoe would be a veritable arbor. Even the slop-jar had its fruit of the vine, bright blue. Their purchases securely boxed would be dispatched at once to San Francisco. That success plucked up their courage.

Those lugubrious days after their landing were succeeded by days almost yellow, creamy days when London seemed rich with opportunities for a former muleteer, now affluent, and his loyal lady. Prudently non-committal, Eilley inquired about the Queen. She did not want a mere innkeeper snooping into her affairs. The innkeeper, however, knew that if Mr. Bowers was an American citizen, he could get information at the American consulate. To the consulate they went, only to be referred to the American minister's. In Mansfield Street, off Portland Place, they did not get to see Mr. Charles Francis Adams, son of a president, who had preceded them to England by only four months, and was nervous about his pestering compatriots. They did visit with a nice youth, also named Adams, who said the Queen was at Balmoral. "We'll go to Cannon," Eilley told Sandy when they found themselves in the street.

The next thing was a gown for Balmoral, without the aid of Mr. Gagelin. Black and sedate it was, with a white insert like an oversized spear head in the bodice, a white collar, and white lace tumbling out of the sleeves. The skirt felt voluptuous enough about her legs, except that it nowhere touched them. She was not in mourning, since if she could only be gay, Tessie would be gay too, wherever she had gone. Tessie would have wished her to call on the Queen, for years after she could have told her all about it.

They barely paused at Connon to dumfound the family and the village with their assurance and their largess. Her mother, over seventy, slaved on more from habit than necessity in the same cot from which Eilley had escaped nearly twenty years before. Every Christmas Eilley had sent her a ten-dollar gold piece, and for the last year, twenty, thirty, and finally fifty dollars a month. Now she left her a hundred dollars from their ample letter of credit.

Then they proceeded to Braemar in Aberdeenshire. At her first glimpse of the castle by the Dee, Eilley regretted that hers was not to have a tower. It would, to be sure, have a cupola that was practically a turret. Queen Victoria, it seemed, and the Prince Consort were going out every day at noon, taking their luncheon which a gigantic highlander carried in a basket on his back. Another highlander, who acted as a sort of general facto-

tum, led the pony of their cart, attended the Queen at doors, and was handy about cloaks and shawls. At Balmoral there would be no court presentations, but Her Majesty was graciously receiving a few of the elect. It was very possible, the townspeople thought, that she might show a sympathetic interest in a notable Scottish-American and his wife. Shortly, however, she was returning to Windsor. Eilley might be received here and presented in London later after she had patronized Mr. Gagelin in Paris.

Entrée to the right functionary was comparatively easy. Her Majesty, he averred, had the warmest affection for Scotland. An allusion to silver in Nevada piqued his august curiosity. He would see what could be done. He asked a number of discreet questions. Her Majesty received no divorced ladies. Mrs. Bowers ——?

Eilley shot a glance at Sandy sitting as if he were about to swallow a prawn. He gulped, and the prawn, or whatever it was, went down whole. "I divorced two Mormons," she said, "for polygamy."

An astonished, pained, but compassionate look passed through the functionary's eyes. Doubtless he had heard of the Saints and their profligacy without ever having beheld one, let alone one of their victims and legal relicts. It was an invariable rule, he affirmed, composing himself to his duty; in the circumstances Mr. and Mrs. Bowers would understand . . .

Mrs. Bowers did not understand. In the road back to the inn she knew there must be some mistake. Her divorces from the bishop and Alec had been measures to preserve the very fiber of her respectability. The model Queen, the Queen who had so long since determined to be good, would rightly esteem that the most valid of all valid reasons. Eilley would take up the matter with the minister.

3

In Cannon she flaunted the gown before the wives of the cotters, and bought from a pedler the Paisley shawl he had hoped to sell to the lady of some knight. No, she had not been presented to the Queen at Balmoral. Her Majesty was progressing to Windsor Castle. Mr. Bowers was making arrangements with a lord in waiting. A presentation to royalty was an event which took a lot of preparation.

Cannon, the moor, the birring partridges, the heather and the broom! She would carry some roots of the broom to Washoe and set them out around her castle among her pine trees. The Black Isle was restful after Nevada, but she queerly abhorred the idea of rest. She must be up and doing, manifesting the Sierran elevation to which she had attained. She would provide her mother with a good home. The American post had brought a draft for sixty-two thousand dollars, the pro-

ceeds of the Bowers ore for August. She employed the village stone-mason to add a wing, and the village carpenter to remodel the whole cot inside. From London she would send up new movables. What Eilley would do she would do. Old Mrs. Orrum was too resigned to be more than acquiescent to a child who seemed more like a fairy god-daughter.

A few weeks, and Eilley and Sandy were traveling down to London. There was much to use that sixty-two thousand dollars for, though they had left in San Francisco almost enough to pay for the house. They must follow the Queen and see this difficult Mr. Adams. They took up their quarters in the Caledonian Hotel because it was familiar. Eilley cried as they entered, on account of Tessie. Then she dried her tears and whisked Sandy off to the American legation. Once more the young Mr. Adams informed them that the minister was occupied. They talked with him for only a moment. From the morning paper it appeared that there was some trouble about a man named Slidell, a southern rebel. Eilley did not know much about this rebellion that was going on in America, but she did know that every rebel ought to be hanged.

She bought a bedroom set, plainer, without grapes, for her mother at the same place where she had got her own. She also purchased two sofas, one for her mother and one for herself. Hers was upholstered in turkey red

plush with buttons sewed into it. Two tubby chairs similarly tufted really belonged with it; so more of the letter of credit went for them. Her mother's parlor set was gray as was befitting. The next day she went back and bought another sofa with its equally companionable chairs and some footstools and antimacassars.

Every morning she and Sandy appeared in Portland Place, only to be told time after time by the servant who answered the bell that even the young Mr. Adams was engaged. This Mr. Slidell and his difficulties vexed them. The days sped. Sometimes they walked in the park to watch the people. The gowns and cloaks that she saw there convinced her that she must have something finer for every-day wear before she could work up, as it were, to being presented. Perhaps it would be just as well to go to Paris for Christmas. After that Mr. Adams and the Queen might be more accessible.

One morning before they left, a gentleman at the hotel showed them a piece in the paper about silver from Nevada being put up in one-hundred-and-twenty-pound packages for shipment to some Mr. Rothschild in London. Perhaps this Mr. Rothschild would have influence with Her Majesty's lord in waiting in the matter of virtuously divorced ladies. Eilley ascertained his address and dragged Sandy around to the street and number. It turned out to be a place of business so confusing that they managed to speak only with a boy who seemed

doubtful that there was a Mr. Rothschild after all. She would try again when they returned from Paris. As they were leaving, another mail brought a seventy-four-thousand-dollar draft for September, with bills for the woodwork in the house that was costing more than they had expected. Eilley put it, uncashed along with the other, into her portmanteau. Their letter of credit had so far abundantly covered even their unusual expenditures.

4

In Paris it was different. What with the language, the money that did not seem like money, and the excessively polite people, they soon had to find the American minister's and a bank. At the minister's an assistant of Mr. Dayton vouched for them after studying their passports in surprise at the amounts of the drafts. The banker, who spoke English, was kindness itself, and recommended that they leave most of their money in his care. He also provided them with drafts to pay the bills for the woodwork and referred them to an unimpeachable jeweler. At the jeweler's Eilley was temperate, taking only a brooch, a pair of earrings and two bracelets, all set with diamonds. There was no call to be extravagant. They could go back another day for more. That day, however, they disposed of about twenty thousand dollars, which exceeded what they had spent on their en-

tire trip to that date. Mr. and Mrs. Bowers were getting their stride.

From a silversmith they learned that they could have a complete table service made to their order of the actual product of their mine, if they would have the bullion shipped to that gentleman direct. He also could fashion door knobs and stair rods of silver in any design desired. Eilley promptly wrote the letter home that would start the bullion on its way to Paris. The silversmith, moreover, directed them to a glazier who was glad to sell them enough heavy plate-glass for all their windows.

She rested a day before approaching Mr. Gagelin. He, it developed, had come to the point in the holiday rush where he was refusing orders. Eilley's hint of their source of income, however, persuaded him to reconsider. The gown he made was of blue glacé silk, with two skirts, the lower trimmed with ruches of ribbon in clusters of three at a little distance apart. The front of the upper skirt had a trimming to correspond, placed *en tablier*, while three puffs formed with it a tunic. The puffs were caught to their places by a garland of apple blossoms and grass. The upper one, that on the corsage, and the coronal for the hair, had the simple foliage of the tree itself.

Elsewhere she chose ottoman velour, cerise and white, for a street dress. Also she found a becoming bonnet of drawn black velvet, piped with deep scarlet.

A peculiar arrangement of gullings crossed the brim, and was repeated on the inside. The strings were of deep scarlet to match the piping. The dresses of the best establishments spread out and fell in a graceful manner owing to a new arrangement most happily imagined. Before many days she also had a dress of China rose silk, and a head-dress composed of auriculas of the same color, divided into small tufts. She had inclined toward convolvulus, clematis, orange bloom, periwinkles and white lilac, but restrained herself. By that time she had diminished the balance at the banker's sufficiently to warrant her entrusting him with the larger draft.

For the holidays the Boulevard was lined with little huts from the church of the Madeleine some three miles down to the Faubourg St. Antoine. In one of these little warehouses of second-rate articles Eilley bought an ink-stand of oak with an excellent clock for forty-two francs. Trumpets, drums and detonating squibs sounded everywhere. Children romped about with all manner of play-things, even tiny beer barrels. At the shop of Mr. Giroux, who had out-Heroded himself, Eilley moved wide eyed among the *garniture de cheminée*, the marquetry, the work in the new Algerian marble, which resembled a mélange of alabaster and Derbyshire ware, and the buhl. A few perfect specimens she selected for her mantelpieces.

Paris accepted Mr. and Mrs. Bowers at their face

value as insane like all Americans—geese with gold in their gizzards. They were the prize Christmas shoppers of 1861. Of course much that they bought was really an investment, goods of permanent value to adorn their residence in Nevada. Then with her costume ready, her shopping done, Eilley heard before Christmas the news that Queen Victoria's husband, the Prince Consort, was dead of rheumatism and typhoid fever like any ordinary being. Yet the more death thwarted her, the more her upturned face with those black, black eyes, alert but continent, looked on to the next opportunity.

On New Year's Day Eilley and Sandy stood on the curb and watched the various excellencies dash to and from the levee at the Tuileries. The epaulets and crimson cordons could be adapted to liveries for the servants she was going to hire. The pompons, shakos and busbies were more overwhelming. It seemed immoral to be furtive about what was going on at the imperial court that day. An acquaintance at their hotel translated for them the account in the paper of the affair. After a mass, it seemed, the Emperor had addressed the diplomatic corps in the throne room. Before the mass the place had been overrun with almoners and chaplains, cardinals and the clergy of St. Denis. Eilley decided that, reprehensible as they were, she would be presented to Napoleon and Eugénie.

The court had temporarily flung aside for the Jour

de l'An its mourning for the Prince Consort. When the short period of mourning was ended, Mr. and Mrs. Bowers missed by some fluke the first grand ball of the season, at which there were more guests from the United States than from any other nation. In February the Emperor ordered the gaieties to be more than usually numerous to alleviate the anxiety of the times. Eilley camped for days in the antechamber of the American minister.

Before the second ball, however, the Duc de Cambaceres, who had charge of the presentations, decided to inquire more diligently into the quality, title and social position of the applicants. There had been a scandal. An American had talked with the Emperor on a matter of business, had, in fact, sold him some horses. The next evening at the ball the Emperor had espied the horse-dealer among the dancers. The Duc and Mr. Dayton had arrived at an understanding that thereafter those presented should be at least of social position. Quality and title were to be waived in the cases of Americans. The secretary, therefore, having been impressed by the means of Mr. Bowers but not by his dialect, asked quite casually about his business before the discovery of the Comstock.

"I was a teamster," Sandy blurted, "as good a teamster as ever crossed the plains."

At that the secretary hemmed and hawed until the

upshot was that Mr. and Mrs. Bowers were not on hand for the second ball. The American legation had become shy of horses.

So Eilley had to appease herself by wearing one of her gowns to the fairy spectacle of *Rhotomago* at the Cirque Imperial. There they saw Judith Ferreyra, formerly of the Varieties, considered one of the prettiest women and most fascinating actresses on the French stage. And at the vaudeville another night they attended a play about something or other *Intimes* which the audience evidently thought spicy. Still another evening they went to the Bois de Boulogne to enjoy the carnival of skating. From the shore they saw the ice split with a great crackle and any number of young men soused suddenly into the water. Fifteen, some said, though others said only three, were drowned.

One day they did have a glimpse of the imperial coach and outriders when they were fifty yards away. Eilley always maintained afterward that she had distinctly marked the long nose, waxed mustaches, and goatee of the Emperor. To such as asked her at home she described his narrow brow, his small snaky eyes, and his generally lurid and effete appearance. It was a great moment which a long future only served to magnify.

5

They continued in March on to Italy, a land that

seemed to Eilley almost treeless. Only the cypresses intrigued her. She would have cypresses by her gates in Washoe. They went straight to Rome because the linguistic gentleman at their hotel in Paris had said that Victor Emmanuel was about to be crowned King of all Italy in the Holy City; but when they arrived he was not there, for the obstinate Pope, in the vicinity of whom Eilley could not be quite at her ease, stuck to something that people talked about excitedly as the temporal power. Heaven alone seemed to know where this King was in 1862. A Scotch woman with whom she could chat said that he had been in Naples. So to Naples they went only to find that his entry into that city had been some time before and that he had soon departed. Now the government was still in Turin, wherever that might be. With difficulty they deciphered a map that showed how on their way to Rome they had come through Turin without knowing it.

On their journey back to this overlooked capital, they were advised to stop in Florence, where they fortunately ran across a sculptor like a bandit by the roadside who was doing heads of Venus for keystones of mantelpieces. Eilley promptly commissioned him to execute several mantelpieces for her. Heads would be quite enough, for the statues of entire ladies, and gentlemen, which she could not help observing on bridges and everywhere, were altogether immodest. Since Italy, for all that, was

the center of art, she ordered some miscellaneous busts, and she and Mr. Bowers sat for their portraits, both full and quarter lengths, but not in the nude as Sandy for a moment had been apprehensive that they would be, all to be delivered later. After a thus arduous month, they paused in Turin where they found that the King had gone to a country place. Eilley was getting tired of chasing royalty about. "We'll not wait for him," she told Sandy with some asperity.

Gorged with travel they went back to Connon in the spring to say good-by to her people. There she had another talk with the village carpenter and cabinet-maker. One supreme thing she wanted, a chair like a little throne. Of walnut it must be made, straight-backed with a fleur-de-lys capping each post, armless, stiff and formal, for a small-sized queen. It was an unassuming bit of craftsmanship that she ordained, unassuming because she knew that she had a right to that much regality. Her throne must be fashioned in Scotland.

All winter there had been no indication of another child. Month after month Eilley had hoped on, as she had hoped after her marriages with the bishop and Alec. Apparently the Lord had again closed her womb for a season. The village folk pitied her behind her back despite the pomp with which she bestowed her presence on her birthplace. She could feel their commiseration as if she had been beaten with stripes. In Edinburgh, how-

ever, she bought three perfect peep-stones, one as large as a pomegranate. Though in these as yet she could see no further children, nevertheless woman is always about to be blessed.

6

Toward the end of May Mr. and Mrs. Bowers took passage on the *S. S. Persia* of the Cunard line from Liverpool to New York. Coming through London Eilley had acquired a last boon—cuttings of ivy from Westminster Abbey to set out by and train up her granite walls. The Queen in deepest crape was inconsolably fleeing the connotations of one castle only to plunge into those more harrowing of another. In the main saloon on the deck of the *Persia*, where the panels and ceilings were handsomely painted, Eilley settled herself to read the New York newspapers. They were full of dispatches about the war in the South and advertisements.

Scanning the advertisements which were the easier on her brain, she hit upon a column headed ASTROLOGY. "Astonishing Madame Morrow, seventh daughter," she read, "has the gift of foresight, tells how soon and how often you will marry, and all you wish to know, even your very thoughts, or no pay. Lucky Charms free. Her equal is not to be found. Her Magic Image is now in full operation. 134 Ludlow Street, below Houston.

Price 25 cents, Gentlemen not admitted." Or again, "Miss Wellington, the Great English Prophetess . . . can be consulted . . . concerning lawsuits, journeys, absent friends . . . and who can reclaim drunken and unfaithful husbands. Miss Wellington is the only person in the city who has the genuine Roman and Arabian talismans . . . Highly respectable city reference." And "Mrs. Roeder gives lucky numbers for the lotteries," or "Madame Widger, clairvoyant and gifted Spanish lady prescribes medicines for all diseases," or "Madame Byron from Paris . . ." Truly an extensive choice of ladies who peeped and muttered. Eilley tore out the addresses, though she knew that she was more divinely endowed than they.

The first day out she was drawn to a distraught young woman, alone, hurrying to friends across the Atlantic. Her husband, she confided, had died three months before, leaving her to the charity of her only dear friends, now in America. She had notified them she was coming, had waited for a reply, but receiving none, had sailed anyway in desperation. Within a month she was to be confined. In Mrs. Bowers she had certainly met the right angel, for her confinement began half-way across the ocean. And she had hard labor, and, as her soul was departing, for she died, she called the child's name Margaret after herself. Eilley, with her own little daughter's body coffined in the hold, secretly rejoiced.

Here at length was the obvious fulfillment of that strange annunciation before the birth of Tessie.

If the friends of Margaret Wixson, she assured Captain Lott, were not to be found in New York, she and Mr. Bowers would adopt the child. For the rest of the voyage she cared for the baby more fiercely than if it had been her own. In New York, of course, the friends were undiscoverable. Probably they were fictitious. Margaret Persia Bowers, Eilley named her new daughter, for she had become attached to that fine steamship, and ever afterward called her Persia.

Replete with experience, the travelers arrived in San Francisco after a warm passage to Panama and up the coast. Persia gained strength more normally even than Tessie, and, outside the Golden Gate, actually opened her lips as if to crow. Eilley's cup was running over, so much so that in San Francisco she had to make a few more purchases to celebrate. To the proprietor of one store she recounted some of the treasures she had secured from Mr. Giroux.

"You ought to have a what-not," this gentleman advised her.

As far as Eilley knew, a what-not might have been a stuffed owl. Nothing, however, should stump one who had coped with flounces placed *en bretelle* and *tire-bouchons d'argent*. "Send up half a dozen," she commanded. Half a dozen what-nots proved not too many.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1

BUTTONING and unbuttoning Persia, searching out and administering the special foods prescribed by New York doctors, Mrs. Bowers yet found time to select in deferential stores bountiful delicacies against her housewarming. Sandy took his pleasure in the saloons. Then after the day on the river-boat she, at last, safely attired in her best cerise and white velour in case she should meet any one as the stage-coach climbed the dusty yellow foot-hills, could consider the practical reality of the home-coming. Persia made it easier by sleeping dully while Tessie slept even more soundly in the little white box among the baggage. What would she say to Louisa Ellis when asked to relate her reception by royalty? Had she or had she not met Queen Victoria? That was what, amid the welcoming splendor of her Sierras, Mrs. Bowers had to decide. The first lady of Nevada must not disappoint her admirers by any faltering.

When at length the stage had made even the steep stupendous descent to Carson City, she had not decided.

There, as they changed to the waiting livery rig, she distributed nervously aloof nods of greeting to the few familiar faces in the due but bewildering clamor of strangers at the hotel corner. "Yes, we traveled far," she graciously admitted, beckoning the laggard Sandy to hand up the bags, "and took our fill." In an hour she was craning her neck over the last divide at the spot against the mountains that was her finished mansion. Every mile she doubled her approval of it. Finally she saw on the porch of its reputable squareness, beneath the pillared octagonal cupola with its flag-pole, and behind her fountain, like a spool cut from one piece of granite, dripping its luxuriant water before the entrance, the almost adequate group of neighbors gathered.

In the confusion of Jim, Betsy, Mrs. Hawkins, the stone-mason, and the others as Eilley alighted with the still indifferently sleeping Persia, Louisa Ellis beamed upon her. "And a new baby?" she exclaimed, "and Tessie—what a fine girl she must be by now—is she there on the back seat? I'll lift her out."

"Yes," Eilley said, "she's there—in the white box."

"Oh, Eilley!" they smothered her with pats of anguish; "but what a fine new baby—the living image of Sandy," Mrs. Hawkins declared.

"I don't see it," said Sandy dangerously.

"The very image of you, Eilley, I'd say," Mrs. Ellis contradicted Mrs. Hawkins.

Eilley accepted the homage. "The true blood of the highlands," she said, "is all much the same."

The mansion was all she could wish. The masonry, like that of the Great Pyramid, the contractor explained with pride, was so expertly cut that, even had there been no mortar, one could not have inserted a sheath-knife between the stones. The porch-railing, she noted, was nicely repeated around the open promenade on the second story and again on the roof. She was pleased with the two ponds being dug beneath the springs, one of them with a heart-shaped inlet, and each edged and lined with small boulders around a minute island. Inside the portal, however, it startled and oppressed her to find her furniture and other rare belongings yet to be unpacked. The escarpment of packing cases seemed, at that moment, insurmountable. While the ranchers praised the cigars and whisky to which Sandy promptly set them up, she barely curbed her impulse to attack forthwith the bulky boxes; but it was an hour before the neighbors withdrew, the contractor assuring them all that the mitering and dovetailing of the well-seasoned woodwork would never spread, no matter how dry the climate.

In the next week Eilley arranged her solid furniture, sorted out her knickknacks on the six what-nots, set a block of petrified wood for a stop against one folding door and a bar of silver bullion against another, evolving every day some felicitous manifestation of her instinctive

good taste to astonish Nevada. In the south parlor on either side of the rounded doorway into the smaller room behind, she hung the life-size portraits of herself and Sandy, bright and wealthy looking but self-contained against their crimson backgrounds. Before them on her oval marble-topped table of walnut she placed on its shining standard a bowl of wrought silver from which trailed a grape-vine of lively green wax flanked by two smaller bowls of purple wax grapes. At Mr. Giroux's she had decided that this exquisite hint of the grape motif of her bedchamber must grace her drawing-room. The ceiling above was frescoed in undefiled plaster, but in the library the decorator had painted a blue and flesh-colored frieze of Diana and her nymphs, kept decent by wisps of cloud. The shelves already held some books by such famous authors as Rollin, Benton, Burton and Plutarch, sent from San Francisco on a carte-blanche order. The roots of the broom she planted in a semicircle to embosom her greensward, and the ivy shoots she placed at the corners of the porch. She spoke of Italian cypresses.

"Cypresses'd be too mournful, and besides they wouldn't live here," the man who had taken care of the ranch told her; "now poplars——"

"Poplars? The straight trees they have in France?" hesitating she advanced boldly. "I will have poplars," she assented, "a nice grove and an avenue."

While Eilley thus assimilated her possessions, she planned a spirited palace-warming. Without being snobbish and finical like the enervated Napoleon, she would reveal her prestige to even the select newcomers on the Comstock who seemed preferable to some of the pioneers. Yet all would be welcome. She would have no lord in waiting to ask people questions. To complete the preparations, she had to make her deferred trip to Virginia City, where she was amazed at the growth and confusion of her metropolis. In his anxiety to be near the mine, Sandy had already spent several nights alone at the Gold Hill cottage. As she and Louisa picked their way among the fruit-venders and organ grinders, the swearing mule punchers, swampers and bull teamsters, she marveled at the hillsides and the buildings hectic with flaming bills. She had not dreamed that her peep-stone could produce such imposing hotels of two and three stories, such energetic express offices and such unrestrained grogeries. On one corner they passed a lady with an ostrich plume far too scarlet to be élite.

"For heaven's sakes!" Eilley exclaimed under her breath.

"Yes, that's her," Louisa whispered.

"Her? Who?"

"The one I was telling you about."

"That?"

"Yes, and they say even the best men——"

"Not all the men," Eilley tossed her head with the determination that night to take Sandy with her back to Washoe. At Mr. Piper's she ascertained how much champagne Mr. Bowers had ordered for the reception, and grandly doubled the amount.

2

On the great evening Mrs. Ellis of course came early. Betsy, looking like a cook, had already faded into the kitchen to supervise the serving of the viands. Eilley, in Mr. Gagelin's creation of blue glacé silk garlanded with apple blossoms and grass, waited at the front door. At the vision Louisa was all but carried away.

"So fresh and youthful—and is that the gown you were presented to Queen Victoria in?" she asked in her rapture.

Thus at last had the fatal question descended. "Mr. Gagelin in Paris made it," Eilley admitted, "especially for court wear."

"There couldn't have been any finer there ——"

"Mr. Gagelin told me there wouldn't be . . ."

"And what did the Queen have on?"

"Her Majesty was in mourning . . ."

But Louisa had too many questions to wait for complete answers, and guests would soon be on the threshold. "Some time you must tell me every word, every word the dear Queen said to you."

“Her majesty was worried over the death of her dear mother . . .” Eilley began, but the arrival of Mrs. Hawkins providentially spared her from finishing the sentence.

Before the throng should appear, the three had to make a round of the rooms. The ladies touched her china, her linen and her silverware, with appropriate ejaculations. “Mr. Bowers has busses coming,” Eilley said in the library, “for the top shelves and the niche on the landing in the hall.” At the contraption with the grape-vines in the parlor, the ladies paused in ecstasy. “Mr. Bowers paid five hundred dollars for it in Paris,” Eilley said modestly.

“Five hundred dollars!” they marveled; “you don’t say!”

The other guests began to alight from their conveyances and were received by the Chinese boy in the livery to which he had objected. Mrs. Bowers peered from the parlor to welcome at once those partaking of her superior hospitality. To her disappointment she found herself greeting mainly the crude and thirsty miners whom she had long known, and no ladies. On this occasion even a multitude of men would not be enough. She must have the best new ladies of the Comstock, for slaves, as it were, behind her chariot. The more important mine superintendents and their wives would doubtless be fashionably late.

"Mrs. Bowers meet Mr. Mackay," one old friend did introduce a ruddy little Irishman with bluish eyes. "Mr. Mackay's superintendent of the Bullion," but he seemed too insignificant to make anything over.

She vaguely remembered that he had been a mere mucker and timberman in the Mexican before she went away. The men stood awed beneath the gilded rays of the sunburst clock in the hallway and were quite taken off guard by the silver door-knobs and the silver keys attached to the silver key-holes by their silver chains. Only prompt recourse to the liquids, over which Sandy presided, restored their equilibrium.

Then Eilley, still peering from her station beneath her portrait, perceived on the porch a head-dress unmistakably feminine. Some very great lady had arrived. Hastening to the door, Eilley paused in a momentary daze, for she had been mistaken. The newcomer was a shadow to darken the high character of that civilized reception; it was the scarlet woman. The effrontery of a miner to bring Julia Bulette to *her* house-warming.

Eilley was upon them as they passed the Chinese boy. "You'll take her right out," she flamed.

Sandy, unaccountably emerging at that moment from his place by the buffet, had followed her. "But Eilley——" he tried to remonstrate.

"She'll not set her foot in my parlor!"

Without any real words, just expletives, out they

went into the night. Eilley drew the line "there." She would not receive loose women from those two rows of white cabins on D Street. "Julia Bulette!" she choked to Louisa in the corner whither she retired for an instant to collect herself; "the prostitute!"

"You did just right," Mrs. Ellis upheld her.

"Mark my words," Eilley drew herself up, "that whore will come to a bad end." Thus flatly did she dare at the proper moment, so she felt, to predict a sudden death.

The evening as it advanced taxed her vital powers as much as if she had been the Empress Eugénie, though the flower of the Comstock still delayed. Accompanied by Louisa for propriety, she maintained the high tone of the affair by conducting one group of gentlemen after another up-stairs and down, pointing out each beauty—the carved legs of the rosewood piano, her hand-painted bedroom crockery, the built-in drawers where she let them glimpse Sandy's new winter underwear of finest English wool. Of course she could not display her own more intimate things. Leaving the gentlemen with Mr. Bowers in the dining-room, she would sit for a few minutes on her throne chair with her skirts spread out and falling around her in that graceful manner owing to the new arrangement most happily imagined. "It's a little harness," she explained to Mrs. Hawkins behind her hand, "with a groove for the petticoats." Then she

would move over to some of the rougher gentlemen who were handling her precious objects. After steering them toward the refreshments, she would return to her throne only to espy more men in the hall examining the back of the golden-rayed clock.

Her receivable guests drank a great deal of champagne, singing in the corners and underneath the nymphs in the library, staying long after midnight. As their liquor mounted or settled in them, they noticed Eilley's treasures less. The flower of the Comstock did not appear at all. Indeed, Louisa, Mrs. Hawkins, Betsy, and four rather plaintive others were the only ladies among a hundred men. And at one o'clock a couple of the boys, engaging in a sudden fight, smashed a valuable conch shell in which you could hear the ocean if you put it to your ear. Though social prestige evidently could involve trials as well as gratification, it was a fine rich affair to swell a body's soul. She must remember that the leadership of high society, like Rome, was not to be won in a day.

3

Thus Eilley Orrum had come to her grand period, to the days of peace and plenty, of grapes and roses and pomegranates, to which she had looked forward with such consecrated assurance from the Cannon moor. True, the men at her dinners did show their most active

interest in Sandy's wine cellar, but her genius had made even that possible, and they really came, she knew, because she was the long since ordained queen of Washoe. True, also, Julia Bulette remained one acute prickle among the roses. It was a little thoughtless of God to have made all women in Nevada precious, the harlots as well as those good women, the wives and mothers of men. In the glutted markets of Utah, no harlot had been at a premium. Yet of course Sandy would not pursue amorous dalliance outside the family circle.

Months sped while those fat days were crowded with great responsibilities. She had Sandy bring a brass band from Scotland to enliven their guests. From the artist, Hill, who had exhibited in Boston and Philadelphia, and had come west to be patronized by Governor and Mrs. Leland Stanford, those connoisseurs of California, she purchased some refined paintings of mountain streams and contented cows. And in her lagoons she planted the goldfish about which she had dreamed in Connon, and set them to spawning with a will until they filled the water. Every town, however, already had a band of its own, the men of the Comstock did not seem to appreciate art, and, glancing into the pools, they took for granted the prolific splendor of fish as part of the magnificence of the mansion, and did not look again. With Persia on her lap who, comfort

that she was as she began to dimple and smile, had alien ways, Eilley enjoyed some restful moments sitting by her French plate-glass windows which dominated the whole prospect, so pleasantly static after her travels. Across the brown hills Sandy stayed many nights in the Gold Hill cottage because, he always said, he had to be at the mine, which was now producing almost the million a year on which from the first Eilley had set her hopes. Comstock silver, people declared, was paying for the war with the South, though how nobody could tell. In her clear new crystal like a pomegranate from Edinburgh she could see a deposit of the white metal without end or bottom, rent here and there by signal accidents, and wrapped in several attractive winding sheets, one of which must be for Julia Bulette.

To her estate came only a few of the newer great on the Comstock, but among them was a Jewish gentleman, Mr. Adolph Sutro, who talked continually of the need for a mammoth tunnel under the mountains from the Carson River to tap that unthinkable enormous main lode. Of such a tunnel Mrs. Bowers was glad to approve. She would overwhelm the Comstock with more and more silver. Then, though the unpolished population now continued but to esteem without being moved by the elegance which much silver had already made possible, her country estate and all it implied must win against the grossness of life so manifest on the slope

of Mount Davidson. That grossness fascinated her as material worthy of her molding hand. Now that her line and tradition depended on poor Persia, her desires, still rising and crashing, must fulfill or spend themselves in a present genteel reign over her community.

In Virginia City one morning, with the excuse in her mind that she had to go down to the Indian camp after a washerwoman, she walked in bold uneasiness past Julia Bulette's house to ascertain for herself just what were that creature's attractions. In front of the drawn window-shades she marked the potted roses, geraniums, and fuchsias.—How could a low woman like that afford them—ten dollars a pot they were at the florist's? Mrs. Bowers, however, would build a whole greenhouse. Probably harlots even had music and refreshments in the evening too. Though they had perhaps few goldfish, they afforded a pastime with which Mrs. Bowers must more earnestly compete in other ways.

That afternoon on her way to Louisa Ellis's, she bought a hat as nearly like Julia's as she could remember, but kept it unexplained in its box while Louisa sketched the state of affairs in the city: "Fighting something terrible in the streets—the saloons—and the brothels—shooting and stabbing each other and bashing each other's heads in with their crowbars and their pick-axes. Why, the other day a big German threw a little Italian down a mine shaft."

Eilley gasped with the unformulated feeling that in her metropolis fights would naturally be thorough.

"And only yesterday morning," Louisa hurried on with a serious relish for blood, "a man named Philip Hopkins, living down Empire City way, murdered his wife and seven children—yes, seven children—it was all in the paper. His wife had red hair and he scalped her, and then he cut his own throat and galloped away on his horse straight to Carson."

"Carson City?" Eilley repeated all she could grasp of that vivid horror which certainly was thorough enough. "They ought to hang him."

"They won't have to," Louisa said; "he died right in front of the Magnolia saloon."

"The Magnolia saloon!"

"Yes, the Magnolia. Many's the day I've passed it," Louisa lamented, "but the saloons right here in Virginia are just as bad, and Piper's Opera House as bad as the worst. Why last evening they say that that Sallie Hinckley ogled the dress circle all through the performance, and that that Flora Bray had five encores to her ballad, and last week the manager himself was telling the audience he just bet if there was a marriageable lady in the company, she wouldn't go over the mountains unwedded."

"Prostitutes!" Eilley was on solid ground; "they're prostitutes when they come over the mountains."

“And that Julia Bulette,” Louisa went on deploring the dearth of virgins, “they say she’s English but she lived in even New Orleans and Angels’ Camp, and you know what *they* are, before coming up here while you was in Europe, and now the Virginia Engine Company’s made her an honorary member because she gives them a big donation before every ball, and no telling what else she gives them. There’s them as say her money comes now from some of the richest in town.”

“In my peep-stone I can see her death,” declared Eilley in calm fury, though with awe at the audacity of her outright lie. Enraged, jealous, wondering what Louisa meant by that, Mrs. Bowers went on to the Gold Hill cottage to allay her suspicions by spending the night there with Sandy, to whom, unlike her previous husbands, she would cling for ever. In the evening she had him take her to that same opera-house to hear a Mr. Mark Twain’s instructive lecture on the Sandwich Islands, but with a sudden trepidation she could not bring herself to wear the hat like Julia Bulette’s.

At the lecture it appeared that the tragedy of Mr. Hopkins had been somewhat exaggerated. In fact there had been no Philip Hopkins, no red-haired wife and no seven children, but the whole story had been made up by this Mr. Twain to advertise himself. Eilley felt cheated. There ought to have been a Mr. Hopkins running wild. Since Louisa and Mr. Twain had told of him, he ought

to have been real. And Sandy did seem less ardent than of old. He had developed a cough, was losing weight and really needed the country air of her valley all the time. Feeling still more cheated as she went through Virginia City late the next morning on her way back to Washoe, she saw Julia Bulette working the engine pump with the men in their uniforms at a small fire. Mrs. Bowers must indeed do better.

4

She would increase her competition by adding brocaded overdrapes to her lace curtains and by building a bath-house as well as the greenhouse. Her responsibilities were greater than ever, while she grew more anxious about Sandy alone nights in the Gold Hill cottage. She taught Persia to creep, to walk and to talk, pottered with her flowers, moved about touching and straightening every day each dear fragile thing she possessed. Every afternoon she would don a different gown and wait for callers, since sometimes strange, distant ladies driving by would stop and ask to see her flowers. Upon them she would press her finest. When sometimes they came back to pause outside, she knew she was making headway.

The Mr. Mackay to whom she had paid so little attention at her house-warming had turned out to be

more important than she had thought—he was now superintendent of the Caledonia as well as of the Bullion—but he was never able to accept her invitations to dinner. In Virginia City a Mrs. Bryant, who was a mere boarding-house keeper, seemed to have thrown herself upon his protection, seemed indeed to be occupying a great deal of his time. As for the bluff blond Mr. Fair with a soft voice, who superintended the Ophir, he too ignored the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Bowers, but Mr. Sutro still sometimes partook of it and told them many interesting things.

“Do you know vy ve have to use mules in the mines?” he would demand. “Vell, ven a horse comes to a place too low, he vears his head and cracks his skull, but a mule, he ducks his ears.” Mr. Sutro was starting a town of his own at what was to be the mouth of his great tunnel. “I must start a graveyard,” he would say. “Vy, ven a man is killed, all his friends, they go to Virginia City for a great big funeral, and stop my vork for two shifts. They lose four dollars apiece wages, they pay two, three hundred dollars for teams, and they all get drunk. I must start my own graveyard.” Later he told Eilley, who was always interested in graveyards, “My graveyard they say is too lonely. They von’t let me bury nobody in it,” but in a few days he came in glee again with Sandy. “Two men,” he said, “vot hadn’t paid their dues to the Miners’ Union, they get dropped in

the cage to the shaft bottom. They have no friends. I start my graveyard with them."

In entertaining and listening to Mr. Sutro, Eilley felt comfortably that she was furthering his splendid project, and that he in turn was building up her solid glory.

She must thus further every important development. The Comstock must turn out to be a great bonanza yielding far more than the fifteen millions a year that people said it was producing now, and her mine must be ten times as rich as any of the others, to exemplify once and for all her fruitfulness. Judge Cradlebaugh, who had gone to Washington as what they called a territorial delegate, was still talking against the Mormons and demanding that Nevada be made a state. Eilley approved of that, and was therefore not surprised, though she did not quite know what it was all about, when Mrs. Hawkins rushed in on the last day of October in 1864 to say that the state had been admitted to the Union. "President Lincoln needed another state," Mrs. Hawkins said, "to stop slavery."

Eilley was glad she had been so willing and able to accommodate this President who seemed a very worthy man. Through him her destiny had made Nevada out-speed Utah. Yet the production was falling off, stocks had declined, and two bullion-dealing firms in Virginia City had failed. No wonder God had turned His attention in other directions, having lost interest in spouting

up silver for miners who preferred D Street to her mansion where they could have spent evenings of profit and comfort listening to that high-souled conversation for which she never ceased to yearn.

Her God, however, with His quick remedy for even what seemed like chaos, had sent a Mr. Sharon to the Comstock to open a bank. To Eilley a bank seemed a highly desirable adornment for her empire, and this one, they said, was a branch of the great Bank of California. She must approve of it by taking Sandy to call on Mr. Sharon. In his office they found him a small man with dainty white hands, a large nose, long mustache, tiny goatee and cold gray eyes that had a pained look. Though Eilley knew at once that he would do great things in her canyon, she was disturbed because he reminded her in his small way of the bishop.

"Mr. Bowers is very glad," she told him, however, by way of opening the conversation, "that the city is to have this bank."

"Yes, the Comstock needed a bank," Mr. Sharon said easily; "it was too wasteful without one. The mines were just going wild. As the poet Pope says,

"'You purchase Pain with all that Joy can give,
And die of nothing but a rage to live.'"

Eilley, not having had the pleasure of Mr. Pope's acquaintance, was nonplussed by the glib poetry. Indeed,

though she had intended to ask Mr. Sharon to dinner, the poetry made her feel so queer that it seemed better to delay such social intercourse. Some day she might dislike him enough to find his face in her peep-stone, doubtless hand in hand with some hussy. Meanwhile it was her duty to avail herself of what appeared to be the function of his undertaking, to provide every one with an abundance of money. "Mr. Bowers," she announced to Louisa on her way home from the call, "will hire some money at the new bank."

Even with the advantage of the bank, the output of the mines, including the Bowers property, fell off steadily. Mr. Sharon, however, soon accumulated a string of stamp-mills. Mr. Sutro said that he lent money on a mill, then refused to give it trade from the mines which he already controlled, and thus had it shortly in his hands. Sandy signed notes and checks without looking at them. Any one who asked him for a loan got it, and any prospector who wanted to be staked knew where to look. Yet there was plenty of money for more jewels and additions to Eilley's wardrobe. Her Chinese servants had in the end quite refused to wear the liveries which, she regretted, were too *recherché* for Nevada. Now she had simplified her retinue to a cook, two house boys and a gardener. In front of her mansion the ore wagons with six- and eight-mule teams jingled continually across the bridge and along the road to the Ophir

mill, the roar of which came and went with the wind. She could hear trees in the mountains thud as they were felled and logs slide, bump and shriek down the flumes. She was never lonely for sounds.

Persia at five was as sedate and incomprehensible as a tortoise-shell cat, sitting by the hour at the window.

"Why don't you play with your toys?" Eilley would ask her.

"I don't like this room," she would reply though it was one of Eilley's most garnished chambers.

If Sandy would only take care of his cough, not let people rob him, and stay at home . . .

5

While Mrs. Bowers waited for the loose women to be put for ever in their place, the great bonanza to explode from the earth, and the world to bow at her feet, one January Sabbath afternoon when she had again spent a night with Sandy in Gold Hill, she heard a sharp knock and admitted Louisa Ellis, panting from her hold on the reins down the abrupt grade from Virginia City.

"Well, it's happened," Louisa announced.

"It? What?" Mrs. Bowers was ready to be shocked. "What has come upon the city now?"

"What you said," Louisa was still breathless; "a Chinaman takes in the wood there and sweeps," she

gained in voice but not in coherence, "and he kindled the fire there—eleven o'clock this very morning it was—and he saw she was covered in bed, and then he left."

"Louisa, what has happened? Who——"

"Who? Who but Julia Bulette! Another woman of the same kind next door went in to call her for breakfast, and she found her pillow was over her head, and her face and all the bed-clothes was wet with blood, and there was marks of finger-nails all over her throat, and a place on her forehead from a pistol cock, and the back of her hand was all torn where she'd been struggling."

"Louisa!" Eilley felt a quick, almost speechless glow, and then with an intake of breath she demanded, "you're sure this is true, Louisa, and not like that Mr. Hopkins story?"

"True? It's as true as I'm standing here in Gold Hill that some time early this very morning Julia Bulette was strangled in her own house, and the one that killed her took her furs they say was worth four hundred dollars, and two gold watches, and all her jewelry, and even snatched the hoops out of her ears."

"Well, she was a wicked woman," Eilley pronounced judgment, lifted to the heights of holiness by the success of her prophecy, "and now the city will know and be glad that God has snared the wicked in the work of her own hands."

"Oh, no, they won't, Eilley," Mrs. Ellis, half doleful,

half eager, was positive. "They'll have a splendid funeral for her——"

"But no one will go."

"Yes they will, Eilley, every one'll go."

"I," said Mrs. Bowers, "won't go."

"Nor I," said Mrs. Ellis, "but all the men will."

The next day it was Eilley who ascended to Louisa's in Virginia City, to learn of the progress of the drama. The Virginia Engine Company, it seemed, had promptly met and as promptly decided that though their honorary member had belonged to the class denominated "fair but frail," she had been of such a kind-hearted, liberal, benevolent and charitable disposition, and had always taken so great an interest in the fire department, that it was eminently just and proper for the company to bury her.

"Eminently just and proper for a——!" Mrs. Bowers and Mrs. Ellis exclaimed together as they heard the news from another exemplary wife next door.

"At the last funeral I attended," Louisa declared, "the minister said the pomp of a public funeral should be reserved, those were his very words, for an ennobling influence gone out of men's lives. I'll always remember that beautiful sentiment. Any sincere being, he said, is such a noble influence."

Mrs. Bowers and the lady next door, whose husband belonged to the engine company, nodded their approval.

Eilley would gladly have mourned, or, more important, sent Sandy to mourn, behind the hearse of any decent person, but Julia Bulette! The lady next door said all the wives of the engine company felt the same way about it. That afternoon it was a heated question whether any married man would dare to ride in the cortège. Nobody cared about the harum-scarum; they could parade and be damned; but the Virginia Engine Company was one of the most distinguished organizations in the community.

The lady next door brought Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Bowers hourly bulletins. "If my husband should so much as dust his helmet . . ." she said, with bated breath that covered a wealth of pent-up invective.

Yet the next day the married as well as the single did dust off their helmets with a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused than any legal helpmate could fathom. Julia Bulette, like a romantic eagle, had mothered them with her public spirit and her private favors. She stood for what the Comstock stood for. Her soul was at one with the soul of those drilling, blasting, crushing miners in a way that a lady like Mrs. Bowers would never comprehend.

"It's the principle of it," the men had argued in their high-mindedness, so the lady next door reported, "not the person at all." And so, almost to a man, the Virginia Engine Company put on its light blue greatcoats,

with pearl buttons like desert lilies and huge manly flaps on the pockets, stuck its right hands into its bosoms, and with its left grasped its tasseled silver bugles. Thus brilliantly attired in accordance with the principle of the thing, it rode somber faced behind the casket from the church to the cemetery in the most fundamentally stirring procession the Comstock had witnessed. From behind their Venetian blinds the wives, including Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Bowers, on the gingerbread terraces that lined the street above, watched it with begrudging wonder. Those fitting obsequies were the chief social event of the winter, eclipsing anything Eilley had ever attempted. That was a holiday the men of Nevada could appreciate.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1

LATE on the afternoon of the funeral Eilley returned to Washoe. The Lord with one blow of His outraged might had cast the stumbling-block out of her way; yet she could not rejoice. She felt dull, heavy, spiritless. As she drove up the lane in her sumptuous clothes, the wind beneath a strange rumplike cloud flexed her stripped poplars, tugged at her bonnet strings, blew her uncomfortably awry, while disconsolately she watched trickles of grit slide from under a patch of old snow on the flank behind the mansion. Inside the house she found that Persia, whom she had left to a reliable mahalie and the distant supervision of Mrs. Hawkins, had the earache. Neither crying nor whining as a hearty child should, she merely knelt at a window marking the glass with her finger or staring at the scowl of hills across the lake. Even with the child on her lap Eilley could not properly concern herself with the earache, for the cloud and the slipping pebbles had brought swiftly to her thought that incident of five years before.

During the Bowers' sally against Europe, old Orson Hyde had written dire things to the people of Carson and Washoe Valleys. Unless they sent him twenty thousand dollars for the sawmill and land which he claimed only to have rented to Jacob Rose when he left, they should be visited by the Lord of Hosts with thunder and with earthquakes and with floods, with pestilence and with famine. The mill, the Olive Branch understood, was in the hands of R. D. Sides, and if his demand should be repudiated, he threatened, Sides and Rose should be living and dying advertisements of God's displeasure, in their persons, in their families and in their substances.

These ranchers, who lived near, had brought the letter to the mansion and set it before her. "We ain't done nothing about it," they had said.

"Nor should you," she had said hastily, her old antagonism to the Saints kindled. "Pay no attention to it. He took all the men he could back to sin, and now he must abide by the results."

They had gone away reassured by her forthright decision, and she herself had forgotten it. But now, after the flagging reaction of her return, the old threats came back to disturb her, and, as she put to bed the listless Persia, she wondered if she had done right about the Olive Branch.

With this unwonted indecision she took out her crystal in which on this dark night she was actually refreshed

to see vehement fires and avalanches attended by ruin and death. Elder Hyde's curse must extend to all who seethed in sin. Any jolt could knock those who did not belong on her desert into the oblivion the elder had predicted, until their names were not known among men. Could the curse extend to the Bowers family?

"Beware of accidents," she almost menaced poor Mrs. Hawkins who came in just then to inquire about Persia, "and a fire."

"A fire!" Mrs. Hawkins was satisfactorily alarmed, "here in the mansion?"

"No," Eilley was short with such denseness, "in the mines, and in the city too. The whole city may slip down the mountainside, but of course Mr. Bowers and I," she made that clear, to reassure herself, "have nothing to fear."

"I should think not, after all you've done."

At the first opportunity Eilley repeated the foreboding to Louisa Ellis; and when the very next sun had set, one of eight horses, returning with an empty wagon after hauling a load of quartz, fell into a dry cistern of the fire department opposite the Gould and Curry works, and had to be left there all night. The rotten cover had been removed when a mule had broken through not long before. The two friends shook their heads together over this token of worse things to come; but still Eilley could not feel glad.

To shake off this curious depression, she decided that she must show a more positive interest in the life of the city which she could not really wish to doom. She would go to the theaters more, but only to the best attractions. The Menken, it seemed, who had created an immense sensation in San Francisco, and who had previously appeared at the Gaieté in Paris in a pantomime part of the old piece, *Les Pirates de la Savane*, was to favor Virginia City with a classical equestrian exhibition entitled *The Mazeppa*. Anything so classical deserved the presence of the head of Nevada society, who had once enjoyed the Parisian theaters herself. Yet the drama did not cheer her so much as she had hoped, for when the curtain arose on the crowded house she discovered that The Menken was classical after the manner of the statues on Italian bridges. The Mazeppa had indeed some costume as, attached to a fiery steed by the belt and her wrists, she dashed up a steep incline representing rocky mountains, but not enough to cover her attractions.

At least much that Eilley remembered to have been uncovered was afterward explained to her as attractions when, on the way out, there unexpectedly came up to her and Sandy a very odd but pleasant Mr. Lynch of the newspaper with a flutter of mothlike words about the performance. "Seductive—splendor of her attitudes—flame of her expressive eyes—fine paleness of her delicate

hand," on and on this Mr. Lynch went, though Mrs. Bowers had hitherto known of him only from a distance, until she was persuaded that The Menken, like the Parisian actresses, had great perplexing merits. "To look at her you might imagine," he raved, "that some Pradler had refined the art to excess and modeled her nostrils and softened them at his leisure with a delicate chisel. Why, when her mouth opens in that sparkling laugh, those nostrils just quiver and beat like the wings of a butterfly that the hand of an infant has made a prisoner."

"Her nose?" said Sandy. "I wasn't looking at her nose."

"Extreme mobility, Mrs. Bowers," Mr. Lynch insisted, "extreme mobility," and then he vanished in the throng.

Though Eilley had never heard any sane person talk that way, this must be culture, and Mr. Lynch had seemed so bent on pleasing her that she must invite him to the mansion.

It was Louisa who clarified such of that remarkable flow of language as she could recall. "Humph, one of them French courtesans," Louisa said, "another Bulette, and they haven't got the murderer yet. That Goff they arrested on the Placerville road, they had to let him go because they couldn't get any evidence on him."

"They'll never find out any more," Eilley declared

with finality and disappointment because Louisa had shattered her image of the bewildering Mr. Lynch.

"This Menken," Louisa continued, "she smokes cigars, and she sets up drinks for the miners at the bar." And at that moment Eilley, glancing out of the window, beheld in a small crowd on the street below her pallid Sandy, with those bright spots on his cheeks, gaping at The Menken astride a horse as if she were a man. The Olive Branch's curse might extend to him.

Her next venture into the theater proved hardly more fortunate. For a week Piper's Opera House had laid aside the legitimate, she read on the bills, to indulge in the "old style melodeon." Ignorant that respectable ladies did not attend such "hurdy-gurdies," she made Sandy take her, partly in the hope of again meeting the effusive Mr. Lynch, whom she was not ready to beard in his newspaper office. Amid the songs and jollities, and specialty after specialty, she tried not to see the girls in flounced skirts selling cigars and drinks at the bar and at the tables, while she remained but one among the hundreds almost unaware of her presence.

At length the grand *zampillaerostation* act was announced in which a Mr. Johnny Tuers, who seemed a great favorite, assisted by a Miss Amanda Lee, would execute a most dangerous swing on three flying trapezes from the dress circle to the back of the stage. Because it made her uncomfortable, Eilley felt at once that it was

wrong. "It's wicked," she said to Sandy in a ladylike but emphatic undertone, pulling at his sleeve, "Providence ought to step in and stop it," but Sandy paid no attention. Her eyes following his, she watched Mr. Tuers sweep over their heads, until on the last trapeze, God help us, Miss Lee's hands missed him, and with a creaking thud he lay limp before the back drop. As the curtain fell, the audience seemed intensely satisfied, more so than if the swing had succeeded, as though it had paid its dollars in the hope of witnessing just such a tingling incident. The manager stepped before the footlights and craved their indulgence, for Mr. Tuers was but bruised, and the performance would shortly continue with *The Three Fast Women* in which a large amount of shape would be introduced. In the excitement after the accident Eilley quite forgot to look for Mr. Lynch.

"Those hurdy-gurdy girls," Louisa told her the next day, "are from Holland, and they may be moral. Some of them Dutch women are, but not that Amanda Lee."

2

At Eilley's behest Sandy soon sought out Mr. Lynch and brought him to dinner. Sandy had turned their mine into a company and sold stock, but since he was away more than half the time, she knew little of what was going on. "Mr. Bowers is too busy with the stock

exchange," she told the neighbors, "to take his ease at home."

Mr. Lynch, when Sandy had made him pliant and mellow with old French brandy, which he pronounced as smooth as olive oil, gave her confidential news. The bank of the Mr. Sharon, who had quoted poetry at her, owned the Imperial next to the Bowers property, and a string of almost idle mills along the Carson River. Some people already called this Mr. Sharon the king of the Comstock, but the Imperial was not at present doing very well. A Mr. John P. Jones, superintendent of the Crown Point, was doing better. The boarding-house keeper, Mrs. Bryant, whom Mr. Mackay had now married, was really the daughter of a Colonel Dan Hungerford, a patriot of Downieville, California, who had rushed up to Nevada with a company of volunteers when the Indians had slaughtered so many at Pyramid Lake. Jim Fair of the Ophir had a fine nose for ore. Mrs. Sharon had been Maria Malloy, and Mrs. Fair had been Theresa Rooney. Mere Irish, Mrs. Bowers said to herself, but Mr. Lynch, no doubt because he was Irish too, seemed to think their blood as blue as that of Eilley Orrum. Even with thick old French brandy in him, he evidently did not always talk on the high plane to which he had risen at their first encounter.

The second time he came he grew more ardent, under the pressure of the best Bowers champagne, over a lec-

ture which a Professor Compton was to deliver in Gold Hill, for gentlemen only, on the physical causes that lead to separation of husband and wife. In her own experience Eilley had had enough of such separation, and Sandy, with his hands like the legs of a broiler, suited her, much as he stayed away. "A fine thing for our young men," Mr. Lynch was declaring; "we need more libraries for them, always playing billiards or cards, running to the melodeons and dance houses. Professor Compton will open up a new channel to satisfy their thirst for information. He'll show them who and what they really are."

"You must go, Sandy," Eilley urged after he had departed, "to set all the young men a good example."

So Sandy went to the lecture, but when he came home and Eilley asked him about it, "That?" he said, looking sidewise and sheepish. "I've heard better stories in the saloons."

Mr. Lynch himself, hastening to Washoe to sample more Bowers liquor, was fairly explosive. "Vulgarity—filthiness—leprous and rotten old skunk," Eilley could not make out what had unleashed his tongue in that fashion. "The air of Gold Hill has never been so polluted and degraded," he ran on, ending with something about Sodom and Gomorrah. "Our people in Gold Hill," he said, "ought to go to church more generally on the Holy Sabbath."

This time, too, Eilley's interest in the life of the community seemed to have taken a wrong tack, but with the memory of the hard little kirk in Cannon and the carnal worship of the Saints, she was beyond churches.

The men whom she so wished to civilize with her goldfish and her warm mineral baths seemed indeed to be getting rougher and rougher. In Virginia City she had seen the Bactrian camels arrive with two tons of salt from a mine a hundred miles away. So miserably had they been packed that the skin was chafed from their bodies until their hip bones were exposed while their double humps were shriveled to mere sacks over their sides. In charge of Mexicans familiar only with mules, they had all but died from the harsh greasewood they had eaten and from the alkali which had ruined their feet. She had been encouraged when the men had stormed against such unnecessary cruelty, and had hated Jeff Davis for allowing, while secretary of war, the importation of these creatures. Yet now thousands were paying two dollars and fifty cents apiece to see Patsy Fogg fight Harry Cooper for sixty-three rounds, and in the opera-house things were getting worse and worse. There even Sandy went to see a cinnamon bear make short work of whipping four bulldogs against which it was matched. There too, on the Sabbath, a badger fought off a dozen dogs and had to be clubbed to death. No, the men did not seem to care much for her flowers.

In Gold Hill Sandy fussed about the mine and mill, bungled at directing the processes, and got so everlastingly in the way that Betsy said Jim often tried to send him to Washoe more of the time. "I can see many great days coming," Eilley assured the troubled Betsy; "we've the richest mine in the world." Yet she knew that, choked with dust, Sandy was hoisted out of the mine only to drift into the Miner's Exchange or some other place in response to its invitation to "examine the pay streak," for alcohol, he maintained, was always good for a cough. The strange tension of the times had to break. Mr. Sharon, king of the Comstock! What the Comstock had was a queen of the true line of Heremon and Fergus. In her peep-stone Eilley discerned an indistinct change to heighten her significance, and she was ready for it.

3

Contrary to her prediction, Julia Bulette's murderer was captured and slowly tried with a thoroughness that showed how convinced the court was of his guilt. Though Eilley felt only gratitude toward him, the Comstock men were experiencing a moral upheaval. No dastard, Mr. Lynch implied, could kill a deservedly popular lady and escape the punishment that would curdle the blood of the populace aright. Miners off shift filled the court-room eager to see justice done. Eilley herself read every word of the accounts in the news-

papers, while she tried to coddle Persia with her recurring earaches.

Jean Marie à Villain, known as John Millain, born in St. Malo, France—she regretted that she had not gone to St. Malo—had been in California from 1840 to 1853. At the beginning of the Crimean War he had been conscripted for marine service, and he had served as a true hero for twenty-three months in the trenches, being one of the storming party at the Malakoff fortress. Afterward he had returned to California where he had found various roving jobs, as deck-hand on the river boats to Stockton, as sailor on coasters in the lumber trade, as driver of a water cart in San Francisco. The case against him, she saw, left no loophole for acquittal or disagreement, but her Providence could save him.

With two accomplices he had made the round of the houses of ill-fame in Virginia City the evening before the murder, and several of the busiest girls in the profession testified against him that he had spoken of Julia Bullette's diamonds and of her furs. The well-liked chief of police swore to the dying words of the accomplices, Douglas and Dillon, killed at the time of the capture of the three. Dillon had gone to bed with Julia and had later let in Millain who had strangled her. Douglas had incredibly sold the diamonds to Nye and Company right in Virginia City. The case was clear. Millain, found guilty by a jury hot to uphold the sanctity of

Nevada womanhood, was sentenced to be hanged. At the cruel verdict Eilley caught herself shivering as if from a peremptory mountain wind though her mansion, with its stones like those of the Pyramid, was as tight as ever.

And then one day, after all her waiting, she was invited to a fashionable luncheon party by a Mrs. Curtis of whom she had only heard. Decking herself in a new creation from San Francisco, for Paris seemed very distant, she was introduced into a blether of ladies whom she was surprised to find all dressed much as she was. In their silks and corals, their guipure, their chantilly, and their valenciennes, perhaps only from Frankenheimer's and not from San Francisco, they had scarcely finished their Russian caviar from Milatovich's before they began to talk about some gentleman who seemed to be an invalid.

"I wonder if he likes calves-foot jelly," Mrs. Killigrew beside her asked of Mrs. Mullally beyond.

"We must remember," Mrs. Mullally cautioned, "that probably he has low tastes. Perhaps now pigs-knuckle . . ."

"Pigs-knuckle!" this conversation which swirled around the helpless Mrs. Bowers could not be about the sick. Pricking up her ears, she had to say something. "Are you talking," she burst forth with sudden overpowering instinct, "about this—murderer?"

A large matron opposite paused, with a truffle half-way to her mouth. "We—we call him," she said in a slow full voice, "our deliverer."

At that they all in many ways and many words explained how Mr. Millain had made a great sacrifice for them that their beloved mates might be saved from the snare. With a sinking, crawling sensation below her heart, Eilley realized that all these ladies in this society, which had gone on so nicely without her, felt as she did, and that all their husbands had known Julia Bulette. They wanted to bring to these dark days of Mr. Millain, they said, a little cheeriness. And so they had arranged among themselves that each day one of the ladies should prepare (with her own hands no doubt) some little dainty dish to bear up the hill to their martyr. From that fashionable luncheon Mrs. Bowers returned to Washoe in no way uplifted, wondering again what Sandy did in Gold Hill those many cold and lonely nights while she with Persia for company slept under the walnut grapes.

4

In the winter alpenglow the hard hills across the lake from the mansion looked now soft as deerskin, wriggling with many a dark depression, and now hard as dull blemished copper. Among the camps like verdigris on the other side, she would yet etch, though Mrs. Bowers

did not think specifically in terms of etching, her own firm designs regardless of her dear delinquent husband.

It was only a few weeks after that luncheon that her night's rest in Washoe was at last disturbed by Sandy who of late had disturbed it so little. At two in the morning a man came riding to say that Mr. Bowers had caught cold on top of his chronic cough, and that whisky did not seem to relieve the cold. Bundling up Persia, she set off at once for the Gold Hill cottage. There it seemed good to be important to him again, good to make him drink milk and eat oranges, but it was a swiftly passing goodness. It stupefied her to watch the wrath of Orson Hyde and the warning of her crystal fulfill themselves with such a scourge.

"Lung complaint," the doctor said; "he ought to be taken below to the coast."

"The mountains are full of snow," Eilley stoically resisted what she knew he meant.

"Yes, ten feet; we'll do the best we can here."

"Ma," as he had called her of late, Sandy, almost voiceless, pleaded, "don't leave me."

"I never will," she promised and patted his hand, knowing she must not let him talk. Though Louisa as always was helpful, the cottage was full of draughts, and the dust of the mine and the mill was in his lungs. She must not let him talk, but now, when he merely stared and gasped, she must have a few more beautiful words.

"B——" he tried to say something, while she bent over his thin head, and Louisa hovered behind her, "ba-h," he managed.

"There, Louisa," she looked up to her true friend, "he was faithful, and I almost doubted him."

"Did he say something, Eilley?"

"Shh." She sank on her knees to hold his hand and hope for more, but Sandy was already wavering into a coma.

It was at one o'clock on Tuesday morning, April 21, 1868, that he died, a blessed hour which Mrs. Bowers would always remember. "A good man to the end," was all she could say to Louisa as they lifted her from the bedside and led her into the other room.

By her quick, taut resignation to this new evidence of the abstruse ways of Providence, Eilley was for a few moments startled and confused. After all she had used Sandy and now she was ready to put him away, though not quite as she had used and discarded her two former husbands. She would outlive Bishop Hunter and Orson Hyde too. She had Persia. Before dawn she, with Louisa and Betsy, had arranged for a far more imposing funeral than Julia Bulette's. Tall Mr. Keyes, the undertaker, leaned forward with sympathy as he informed her that he had on hand the only stock of Barstow's Metallic Caskets and Burial Cases in the state. Among the silver-plated and metal mountings, the crape, the gloves, the fringes

and the satin linings, Eilley ran over the fine fantastic words in her mind. Mr. Keyes could even get up a real mahogany coffin at the shortest notice, but she instantly told him that she preferred something metallic.

The accounts in the papers were immediate and respectful:

“Mr. Bowers came over the plains from Missouri in 1856. . . . Being in this vicinity at the time the great Comstock silver lode was discovered, he acquired some very valuable interests in that portion of the vein passing through Gold Hill, and soon became one of the wealthiest men in the state. Upon a farm owned by him on the west side of Washoe Lake, he erected a magnificent stone residence, which he furnished in a most sumptuous style, and about which he laid out beautiful grounds. Upon his mansion and ground he expended some \$250,000, and when remonstrated with by a friend for expending such a sum upon a residence in such a wild country as this, he simply replied that he had made his money in this country and that he intended to spend it here where he expected to spend his days.”

Eilley cut out that piece when she came in from choosing the casket. At last her estate was getting due notice, though Sandy was getting the credit. “That is just the way Mr. Bowers was,” she said to the comforting Louisa; “he had no wish to go gallivanting off to the east or to California.” The furniture was brought from Europe, Mr. Lynch’s obituary remarked, as if that re-

flected credit on Gold Hill and its citizens including the editor. While he had not resided in his mansion all the time, the explanation was simple:

“Being of an active, restless, business disposition, he has lived over here in Gold Hill more or less for the last two or three years, attending to his mill and a valuable mine in Gold Hill proper.”

Mr. Lynch knew what to stress and what to minimize.

The funeral was almost noble enough for any one. Sandy had been a Mason, belonging to Carson Lodge, No. 1, F. and A. M. The remains were removed to the hall of Silver State Lodge, No. 5, Gold Hill, and lay in state during Wednesday forenoon, while friends of the deceased viewed them in endless line until one o'clock. Of the worshipful master's eulogy Eilley treasured one sentence in particular. “By his death,” the master boomed, “the state has lost a good and useful citizen, and the working men of this county a true and sympathizing friend.” He might have added that the prospectors had lost the easiest mark they had known. The procession of Free and Accepted Masons in plumes, epaulets, and sabers, on horseback and in carriages, was over half a mile long. One Knight of the Temple, after successfully negotiating on an unfamiliar horse the long steep grade from Gold Hill up to Virginia City, crashed through a defective sidewalk on B Street until even the

top of his admiral's hat was lost to view. Descending safely to the street below, he emerged still mounted, but little soiled, and with his dignity unruffled, to rejoin the parade at the rear. The Masons of Virginia City, Silver City, Carson City, Gold Hill and Dayton, with delegations from the Miners' Unions, moved up Main Street to the Bullion at the juncture of the Ophir Grade. There most of the sorrowing body-guard was dismissed.

Eilley was puzzled by a certain look of relief on their faces, a gleam as if they had been preoccupied with something else than these formal and aristocratic rites. Despite her competent planning, it did seem as if the gentlemen enjoyed burying Sandy less than they had enjoyed burying Julia Bulette. She could not understand it. A handful proceeded on to Washoe where the interment took place that evening on the decomposed granite shelf near the warm springs. John Jasper and Theresa Fortunatus reposed there already, though without headstones. They were too little, Eilley had decided in the end, for cold pillars.

5

Brilliant and grief assuaging as this affair was, it was far surpassed by another two days later. The something lacking which Eilley had noticed, the subdued expectancy, was accounted for by the gala holiday which had

been promised. On Friday John Millain was to be hanged. Early on that morning all the wooden awnings over the sidewalks on B Street were loaded with men and boys, and every balcony was filled with men, women and children, on rented camp-chairs or standing. The youngsters crunched peanuts, and the wives sipped lemonade sent up with gallant flourishes from the bars below.

"Ma-a," a six-year-old would pipe, "will the band come?"

At half past eleven the carriage for the prisoner, with its curtains drawn, drove up to the sheriff's office, and the sheriff's posse of forty special deputies, armed with Henry rifles, marched out and surrounded the carriage. The men of the National Guard, who were ready at their armory, then marched down the street and also formed about the carriage—a fine company of about sixty, all of course in full uniform. Ball cartridges being distributed, they proceeded to load their muskets. At length the pageant began slowly to move. With the prisoner sat two priests. Another carriage conveyed the two officiating physicians and two reporters. Every detail was in accord with the etiquette for such an occasion. Behind the second carriage rumbled a wagon containing the coffin and tall Mr. Keyes, the undertaker. Away in advance a moving throng like a lava flow hurried along the road, over the hills and across lots and fields in the direction of the spot fixed for the public execution. White

women with babies in their arms, Piute squaws with their young ones hanging upon their backs, poling themselves along with broomsticks, long-queued and wide-eyed Chinamen, Mexican women and negro women, women of the town and women evidently from the country, swarmed to the northward.

“Ma-a, I’m hungry.”

“Ma-a, my foot hurts.”

“Ma-a, will he bleed?”

The women gathered up their skirts and stumbled forward, tugging Willie and Susie by the wrists. The bearded men spat and pushed nonchalantly ahead. Those on the awnings and in the balconies had overturned their camp-stools in the crush to follow the carriages, so that an almost empty town remained behind. The gallows had been set up in a sloping ravine just below the Geiger Grade about a mile north of Virginia City and near the Jewish burial-ground. A pleasanter spring day had seldom been seen. Beyond the sugar loaf to the east the alkali flats vibrated under the noon sun. On the sides of the encircling amphitheater of hills four or five thousand people collected.

The essential actors for the drama left their carriages at the Geiger Grade and walked down to the stage on which the spectacle was to be presented. With a light, springing step, almost at a run, so that the sheriff had difficulty in keeping up with him, Millain ascended the

stairs leading to the scaffold, while the children leaned closer against their mothers' skirts. Upon reaching the scaffold, he turned and gazed earnestly upward at the rope, as if curious to know whether it were firmly secured to the cross-beam. Then he knelt on the trap while the priests prayed.

The sheriff asked him if he had anything to say. Haggard, he faced his audience and read in a clear loud voice a prepared farewell address in French. Chief of Police Edwards, he said, had perjured himself on the witness stand . . . Abandoned women had been brought in to swear his life away. . . . The paper occupied about ten minutes. At the conclusion he said in distinct English: "Mr. Hall and family, I am very much obliged to you for your services, and also to the kind ladies that visited me in my cell." Mrs. Killigrew, Mrs. Mullally and the other ladies dabbed their eyes with their handkerchiefs.

His arms and legs were then firmly pinioned, he himself taking off his slippers and otherwise assisting. His collar was opened and the fatal noose was adjusted. The black cap was pulled down over his face, and the sheriff detached the fastenings of the trap. He fell six or seven feet. In two minutes a tremor shook him. His pulse continued for thirteen minutes. In twenty-five minutes he was pronounced dead.

His body was cut down and placed in the under-

taker's coffin. Then the spectators dispersed, and on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, as they had come, they returned down the Geiger Grade to Virginia City, Gold Hill, and their delayed luncheons. Some had come prepared, however, and sat on rocks eating fried chicken, thick luscious ham sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs and wedges of juicy pies, out of ample hampers. For half a mile the road and the sage-brush were littered with eggshells, drumsticks and wings.

BOOK THREE

PHANTOMS

CHAPTER NINE

1

AFTER breakfast on both Thursday and Friday mornings, Eilley, still under the impetus of Sandy's just less than perfect funeral, climbed the path to rearrange the flowers above her dead. In the April sunshine so virile that her whole body ached, she ascended to the granite ledge because she must immediately replace with fresh tulips and hyacinths from her greenhouse the flowers which the night frosts had wilted and shriveled. While the meadow-larks along the fence-posts sang, "Spring, spring, sweet spring has come," and the bluejays swooped and squawked at her from the pines, her mind was sated with plumed and sworded Masons, somber with condolences, chaotic with memories and present duties. After a few of these decorous days of sorrow she must go to Gold Hill and take charge of the mine. What should she do with Sandy's jars of tobacco and his best pipe with the bowl like an Indian's head? On the Cannon moor a quarter of a century ago she had wanted a fine husband, and now she had disposed of her third; she had

needed a dozen children, but her harrowing two and the insufficient Persia had abated without quenching that ardor; she had required wealth, and now even the silver seemed languid; above all she had determined to be a queen. Thursday and Friday mornings she thus climbed to her graves and descended to a hundred decisions that she could not make; and on Friday evening she read the news of the hanging of John Millain.

That upper sitting-room where she read the paper, where Sandy's Sunday boots were ranged along the base-board and his frock coats were laid out on the chairs, suddenly seemed small and mean and thick with cruel gloom. John Millain, the chosen of her God to purify the Comstock and prepare it for the supreme bonanza of the Bowers mine, had been hanged as if he had been a common criminal. Mrs. Killigrew, Mrs. Mullally, and all that blight of fashionable ladies, by taking him for their hero, had balked or changed the Lord's intention. In a closet she still had the hat with the vermilion ostrich feather like Julia Bulette's which she had never dared to wear. Probably even Mr. Sharon, whose cold eyes were full of ugly pain, had known Julia Bulette, and now they had hanged Mr. Millain at a great picnic when they might far better have hanged Mr. Sharon.

Clogged with the dejection of that news, Eilley had no heart to go on sorting over the clothes and other souvenirs of her Sandy. Yet unlike the living bishop

and Alec whom she had so speedily deposited in the farthest corners of her consciousness, she must keep him real and precious. Had he not told her with his last breath that he had been faithful? At forty-one a fourth husband would seem indecent. Amid the dismal writhing of these thoughts, John and Tessie were minute but poignant shadows, and her mother, who had lately died in Cannon, was smaller and more forgettable. About her, Louisa, Mrs. Hawkins, Jim, Betsy, Persia and a hundred others were unworthy of the souls which God had promiscuously scattered over the face of the earth. As yet the sins of Virginia City had not been burned away in a torrent of flame. During those hours before she went to bed, Mrs. Bowers felt weighted and shackled for a torture such as she had hardly known even when she had watched most passionately for the waxing of each futile moon.

In bed she lay with a pressure in her head, trying to sleep, thinking she was practically asleep, when suddenly she beheld Sandy's face in the mirror of the bureau. No, she was not asleep. One moment she had been looking at the walnut grapes under one bracket, almost stroking them with her eyes in the moonlight, and the next she was staring into his countenance so like a bunch of grapes itself. There he was with the same high cheek bones, the same boyish shadows on the planes above his round jaw, the same wisp of beard, that she had loved

when she had first met him. She thanked him for appearing.

"You've put me in a damp place, ma," he said. "I can't rest there easy." Then he grinned in that old inane way of his that had always made her want to take care of him. In the last few years he had got over doing that.

"I will have you moved," she promised, immediately planning how it might be done.

"And now," he went on, "they'll try to get the mine away from you."

"Oh?" she said, swiftly speculative, "and what would you advise me to do?" she asked, repressing with difficulty the instinct to call this sagacious phenomenon "sir."

"Have the law on 'em," came back the reassuring voice that was just Sandy, and settled her more comfortably into her pillows from which the awesome, dematerialized spirit had roused her, "have the law on 'em." In a trice he was gone, and she really was asleep.

Waking, she brooded with a wondrously restored resilience on the vivid reality of Sandy's reappearing and all that it must mean. Take the mine away from her indeed! On the streets of Virginia City she had often heard frockcoated men discuss with sober enthusiasm the future of Nevada as they walked briskly to the bank or the express office. In her crystals she had repeatedly

seen that huge cube of silver which her first clouded peep-stone had shown. She would consecrate her life with all its passion to the future of Nevada, to the raising of that cube, with the help of the renewed Sandy who would grow into a legend of power and fulfillment because of his wisdom in authorizing whatever she might direct. Try to take her mine away? Sandy's faithful, hollow eyes had fairly laughed at such a prospect. It would be that Mr. Sharon who would try. When Louisa arrived after breakfast to spend the day in Washoe, Eilley gave her a solemn recital of the Rising from the Dead and its important conversation with words of counsel.

"I saw him and talked with him," she emphasized the simple fact, "as distinctly as I saw Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, when I was presented in the gown that Mr. Gagelin made."

"And you've never told me yet," said Louisa, with reverence to the verge of sadness, "what the dear Queen said."

That morning, however, Jim Livingstone too had come from Gold Hill, bringing many papers which required her attention at this point. Those who had borrowed from Sandy had given him notes which appeared to have little value, and the notes of many others he had endorsed. "Have the law on them," Eilley said calmly.

"Them as signed the notes," Jim protested, "ain't got nothing."

"Have the law on them," she repeated; "that is what Mr. Bowers would have me do."

"The cash is low," Jim continued, "and we ain't getting the ore we should."

"My mine pays a million dollars a year."

"It's five years since it's paid anywhere near that."

"Why hasn't it?"

"We've lost the vein," he said.

"Then we'll find it again, and take out ten times as much."

"But while we're finding it, there ain't no money in the bank," Jim insisted; "we'll have to sell more stock, and assess it all again."

"Sell stock," she agreed, "and assess it, but when you have the law on those that signed the notes, we will have plenty of money. Those," she drew herself up and cowed poor Jim with her final statement, "are the instructions of Mr. Bowers."

2

The estate at her instigation sued and got judgment on the notes time after time, only to find that the gentlemen who had made them had decamped from the state. Once when a note was not in legal form, Eilley tried to explain to the judge what Mr. Bowers had told her about it.

"When did he tell you that?" he inquired.

"Last night," she said.

"I am afraid," he said, most impertinently she thought, "I shall have to rule out that evidence."

Through the streets of Virginia City where stages, drays, carts and buggies delayed and splashed her, the inspired discoverer of the lode, she picked her way, her teeth set to hold back what was in her, and at home she seethed with satisfying rage. Soon she was fighting every one, lawyers, superintendents, saloon-keepers, even Jim and Betsy, with the superb conviction that she was in the right with all the spirits of heaven fighting for her too. Again and again she talked through the looking-glass with Sandy's dear vacuous face, which seemed more contented when she had insisted on moving him and the children fifty feet farther from the warm springs. He alone understood her perfectly, and she him.

Like a dog growling on its master's grave, she resisted more and more what her old friends, Mr. Sutro with his troublous tunnel, and Mr. Lynch with his optimistic newspaper, tried to tell her of what was taking place on the Comstock. Sharon's Imperial next to her mine, Mr. Sutro would say with contempt, had cut through clay in the bottom of the shaft and struck a barren belt. Sharon was opposing the Sutro tunnel because he wanted to build a branch line shaped like a fish-hook from the new Pacific railroad town at Lake's Crossing on the Truckee

River, a town they had named Reno after some general instead of Argenta as had been fitly proposed. That line would go past the mansion.

Sharon, Mr. Sutro declared, with his Bank of California and some men there named W. C. Ralston and D. O. Mills, already milled most of the ore on the Comstock and supplied most of the wood at prices that would have put a highwayman to shame. "Vight back of your mansion," Mr. Sutro would say, "he's got Chinamen pulling up the bush, the stumps, the voots all over the hills." But Mr. J. P. Jones of the Crown Point was fighting this dangerous would-be king.

"They'll try to take away the mansion too," Sandy's alert mouth warned her that night.

"Let them try!" she exclaimed as she fell asleep, for though Sandy had borrowed on the house and land ten thousand dollars from Mr. Lake, the rancher, who was pressing for payment, with all her heightened vigor she would gorge herself on the conflict.

The John Mackay and Jim Fair that Mr. Lynch talked about so much could never amount to anything. Mackay, the mucker, had come to her house-warming and drunk her champagne with the rest, and as for Fair, he had never come at all. She had gone to Mr. Lynch's newspaper office to inform him of the final settlement of Mr. Bowers's estate.

"Mackay and Fair have just got Flood and O'Brien,"

he greeted her with that strange enthusiasm of his, "to put sixty thousand dollars into the Hale and Norcross. Now Flood and O'Brien run one of the finest little saloons in San Francisco, the Auction at Washington and Sansome Streets, with good sawdust on the floor."

"Mr. Bowers's estate," she announced, ignoring his trivialities, "has come to six hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars, but of course the mine alone," she wanted to emphasize that, "will soon be worth very much more."

"Yes, yes, of course, fine, very fine," he said. "Flood," he went right on, "is a large light-complected gentleman who used to be a Master Mason, and O'Brien is a jolly plump little bachelor who was a ship chandler—that is before they took to tending bar themselves. They serve one of the best free lunches in San Francisco in the middle of the day."

Of what possible interest could all that be to Eilley Orrum, queen of the Comstock? Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien; it enraged Mrs. Bowers to think of such upstart Irish, let alone to speak of them. Fortunately she learned the next time she saw Mr. Sutro that he had no more use for Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien than he had for Mr. Sharon. Though her creditors were steadily importunate, she had even increased to thirty thousand dollars the mortgage on her ranch, and thus paid enough other debts to keep her self-confidence in

good repair. By the end of the year the production of the whole lode had fallen to its lowest point since the first discovery. To all the anxious, except Eilley, the glory of the Comstock seemed to be fading woefully.

Then one day Jim came to say that unless they sold more stock they could not go on with the development work in the mine, and that if they did sell more they would no longer have a majority of the ownership.

"Sell more," she commanded; "we'll soon be down to the solid silver."

In a few weeks Jim came again. "They've assessed the stock twice," he announced darkly, "and we can't pay. You'd better go see Sharon."

"That Mr. Sharon at the bank? Why should I go to see him? I went to see him once, and he just spoke poetry, *poetry*, words and words and words, and Mr. Bowers and I had gone to talk about banking and money matters, important money matters. We told him then we might be willing to hire some money from him. If Mr. Sharon wishes to see me, he may visit me at my mansion."

"No, Eilley, things is different now," Jim fumbled for phrases in his seriousness; "Sharon won't do business but at the bank. This ain't social, this is business."

"Business! When I went on business before, he said fancy rhyming words—about women—in their pains, and raging death—and said they were written by the

Pope. On the Comstock we've had more than enough of these Papists."

"We've got to go to the bank," Jim dourly subdued her; "he bought the stock."

To Mr. Sharon's office they went, Eilley as docile as a led mule, ready to duck her ears and kick, should she be prevented from talking herself and forced to listen to any of his poetry. Mr. Sharon proved to be altogether businesslike, addressing himself to Jim right past her face. What it was all about she could not comprehend, though she managed to interrupt several times with the definite assurance, you could take her word for it and Mr. Bowers's too, that the solid silver was just below where they were digging. "So I hope," he would say, "so I hope," and go on addressing Jim. "Well," he concluded, "I'll be down in the morning to look over things and take charge."

It was outside that Jim tried to explain to her that she had lost control.

"Control of my mine? He's no right to control it."

"Yes, he has, Eilley, and you'll have to do what he says."

"I'll do what no man says, and well you know it, Jim. Three husbands have I had, and I've been holden to none of them."

"But this ain't husbands, Eilley, this is different, this is business."

Eilley would have none of it, she swept it all aside, she never had liked that Mr. Sharon anyway, and Sandy's own lips had told her right after he had become a spirit phenomenon that that man would be up to deviltry. They were standing, Eilley's eyes ablaze in her volubility, before the International Saloon with its sign,

JIM GRAY, THE HANDSOMEST MAN LIVING, RUNS THIS
INSTITUTION BY DAY, AND BYRON BONAPARTE BRODT,
THE MOST AMIABLE OF HIS SEX, MIXES THINGS
NIGHTLY. GIVE US A CALL EVERYBODY.

Curious but indifferent miners, Germans, Frenchmen, Poles, jostled back and forth through the swinging doors, and a harlot or two brushed against her skirts. There on that sidewalk Jim Livingstone, her own brother-in-law, finally succeeded in convincing Mrs. Bowers that after ten years those twenty feet on the side of Gold Canyon had been taken from her irrevocably by William Sharon whom people called the king of the Comstock.

Half an hour later she was predicting to Louisa Ellis Mr. Sharon's immediate and utter ruin. "I can see a fire like all of hell," she said; "it will sweep through all the mines of Gold Hill."

"It's the Lord's vengeance," Louisa backed her fervently.

In the next few weeks to her great relief Jim, Betsy and their sons departed for California. There was little

left for Jim to do at the mine. After the fire with its havoc of retribution for Mr. Sharon, she would soon find a new and infinitely better mine, for she was relying with a deeper joy and satisfaction than ever on the counsel of her sanctified Sandy, now surrounded by a host of obsequious other spirits. Early in April the fire began; Eilley hastened to Gold Hill. The Yellow Jacket, the Kentuck and the Crown Point were all afire underground, and though Mr. Jones superintended the Crown Point, Mr. Sharon owned it. For a week the fire burned implacably, and Eilley was implacably satisfied. In one stope alone thirty-four men were lost. From the porch of the cottage Eilley and Louisa watched the flames and smoke and saw the bodies brought up through the street.

"My God, who is it this time?" she could hear the cries of the women crowding as near as they dared to the shaft.

"His face, just let me see his face," one wife would shriek.

"You can't look at his face," the men held her away.

"His hair, then let me see his hair," and Eilley could see her reach out and touch the scorched head through the blanket. At that a little girl no larger than Persia cried, "Why can't I see my papa?" and the mother fainted in the road.

When the tumult had somewhat subsided, Louisa moved down among the deranged wives to comfort them

and give them what hope she could. Especially she spread the intelligence that Mrs. Bowers had foretold the conflagration. If the miners had gone to Mrs. Bowers, Louisa consoled them, she could have told them not to go to work that day.

3

Yet the fire did not ruin the villainous Mr. Sharon. Confusing as it was for Eilley gradually to realize this, the Lord was undoubtedly reserving for him a far worse fate. Mr. Jones charged him with starting the fire in order to depress the stocks which it was Mr. Jones's function to bull, and he promptly hurled back the same charge at Mr. Jones. Mr. Sutro, having greater difficulties with his tunnel because Congress had not passed the four-million-dollar loan which the legislature had asked, encouraged Eilley by telling her that Sharon with his "bank ving" was the "vorst blocks" in his way. One evening he asked her to Virginia City to a grand stereopticon lecture at which he showed first a picture of the Yellow Jacket on fire, and then one of miners emerging from the mouth of his tunnel and being embraced by their families. With an aching nostalgia for her mine she was glad to go to the Comstock whenever she could.

At this meeting she rejoiced that the Miners' Union subscribed fifty thousand dollars for the tunnel, which,

however, Sharon, even after that evidence of the value of her approval, kept calling "Adolph's coyote hole."

Privately Mr. Sutro assured her: "Bill Sharon just thinks my tunnel vill hurt his crooked vail-voad."

A little later she went to a lecture by Rev. Israel Diehl who had recently returned from the Holy Land, and he said, "My friends, you have right here in Virginia City the most perfect type of Assyrian I have ever seen, in your distinguished fellow-citizen, Mr. Adolph Sutro." The next morning the fiendish Sharon was calling Mr. Sutro "that damned old Assyrian."

Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien, on the other hand, Mr. Lynch informed her, had as little to do as they could with either Sharon or Sutro, and were taking more good ore out of the Hale and Norcross. "Night or day," he would say with his usual warmth, "Jim Fair goes through the mine, here, there, everywhere, and if he finds a mucker so much as leaning on his shovel, up that mucker goes in the cage to get his money. And machines, Jim Fair knows everything about machines."

Through months of such posing complications to which it dignified her to lend her ear and sometimes her fluttering presence, Mrs. Bowers found much unexpected peace with Persia in the solitude of her secure mansion. One leading of Providence was clear, through all those struggles of her Comstock, that fortunes were to be made in that curious thing they called the stock-market.

Though the intensity of the times led every one to call in all the money one could command, and she could hardly withstand the pressure of her remaining creditors, yet a few of the down-and-out and some others were coming to Washoe and imploring her advice.

"When their mines peter out," Louisa encouraged her, "they'll all come to you like they did in the beginning, only more."

Gladly she would advise people on stocks, the more gladly because neither her woebegone clients nor she had any ground on which to dig to the silver half a mile below the surface which she could see, still surrounded by death and peril, in her peep-stones.

One of her clients was a generally silent Major Ferrend. True, he ran a saloon, but it was quiet and distinguished, and as Sandy's lips said to her that night in bed, "Business is business." With all her advice, however, he did seem to buy many wrong stocks. "The mines are so hot now," the Major once said wearily, "that the men won't work in them much longer. They want nothing now but pickles, pigs' feet, and ham with their drinks."

"If the Comstock hadn't gone a-whoring with its own inventions," she cheered him in the blessed words of the Good Book, "it wouldn't have lost the lode nor its digestion either, but Mr. Sutro is soon going to make the mines cool."

In the long waiting time after the first shock from the loss of her mine which had affected her so surprisingly little, Mrs. Bowers was again and again perplexed by the thought that even now she should be doing more for her headstrong state. Of an afternoon when she went to Virginia City and walked under the wooden awnings from store to store, she caught herself wondering what it was, besides the great bonanza, that this baffling region lacked. At every corner she paused in the dust from the sifter wind that scattered old boots and paper collars among the pigs in the gutters, and appreciated the more her Washoe. She would stop to look at the signs, "Piper's Opera House To-night—Grizzly Bear to Fight Bull," "Ambrotypes, Melainotypes, Pearl types," "Dr. Mayer's Bathing Rooms—For Sale: Fresh Hungarian and Swedish Leeches." Even Hungary and Sweden contributed to the luxury and glamour of Nevada; but she had better baths on her estate. She had better pictures than those Ambrotypes, and she could work up amusement certainly more refined than that bear-and-bull fight. That night she conferred with Sandy in the mirror.

"Make a resort of the mansion," he commanded.

"That I will," she promised as if she had thought of it herself.

A great resort was certainly what her restless Comstock needed. Mr. Hawkins had opened baths near

Genoa to steam liquor and rich food out of over-indulgent Comstock ladies and gentlemen, and others were being promoted between Washoe and Reno at Steamboat Springs where small geysers coughed aromatic vapor out of gas fissures. The arrangement of her estate was ideal, and with pure amusements, set in natural beauty and gladdened by art, she could wean high and low from their more sodden lusts and strengthen them for the glorious work of digging out more silver than the world had yet seen. Her earlier parties had been premature. Now the Comstock was ready and ravenous for just the recreation she could offer. "Make a resort!" her ingenious Sandy had ordered.

The day after Sandy directed her thought to this transporting conclusion, Major Ferrend told her that Mr. Jones had wrested the Crown Point from the despicable Mr. Sharon, worked its stock up from 7 to 341, and made his fortune. Unluckily Major Ferrend had no stock in the Crown Point, nor had she, for she had averted her mind as much as she could from all Mr. Sharon's doings. In the flush of her new plan so little was she concerned over this righteous defeat of the enemy that, even as Major Ferrend talked with her, she was watching through the alpenglow, into which the shadow of the mountains steadily pushed its way, some Indians dancing around a fire at the end of the lane.

As soon as he was gone, she called Persia, and hand in hand they set off jauntily along her avenue of poplars to join those old friends of hers.

Bucks and mahalies both were singing and dancing, and immediately they welcomed her and Persia into the circle. "*Dombína sówiná,*" they were singing.

*"Dombína sówiná,
Dombína sówiná,
Kai-va sówiná."*

"The rocks are ringing," they translated it for her when they paused for breath, "the rocks are ringing, they are ringing in the mountains." Until long after dark she and Persia danced with them, wedged in between the thick bodies, as she had danced in the canyon when she had first come with the Saints. "The cottonwoods are growing tall, growing tall and verdant," the red bucks told her what another song meant. "The wind stirs the willows," they went on with another, while Persia, tired now, sat on a hillock of grass and stared. "The black rock, the black rock, the black rock is broken," was the song with which they finished when the moon had half reached the Milky Way. That night Mrs. Bowers slept far too soundly to converse with her departed husband.

When Eilley presented her plan to the holders of the

mortgages on the mansion, they shook their heads. "Take too much money," they said; "we can't let you have any more." Very well then, she would wait. If they wanted their money, that was the way to get it. Mr. Bowers had enjoined her to make a resort of the mansion, and some day that would have to be done. The state, now that it had completed the Capitol in Carson City, and a mint was there too, had a strong interest in just such fine buildings as hers. Her mansion was an unlimited asset. "Fine buildings," they laughed at her, "why the state itself can't raise the money for its most vital needs." One imperative problem in particular, it seemed, was engaging the attention of the legislature. Miners losing their claims, speculators watching stocks fall, wives abandoned and widows left penniless, were going mad without any asylum to take care of them.

Eilley was charmed when one day she heard that the legislature had solved that problem with characteristic gusto by authorizing a state lottery to found an institution for the demented. Imbued by the sanctity of the cause and ready for the first prize of twenty-five thousand dollars, Mrs. Bowers promptly bought one of the five-dollar tickets of which there were a hundred thousand. This "First Grand Gift Concert of the State of Nevada by authority of and under the management of Trustees!" was a reasonable success, though Eilley won only a silver-plated souvenir teaspoon, and though the

asylum was not built until some years afterward when the legislature had appropriated additional money. In the end it became the happy custom for many a ladyless swain to hie himself to this delightful institution on a Saturday evening to dance with the feminine inmates; but to say that is to digress. "Insane asylum?" Eilley said to herself as she went home with her tender prize. "Ah, but that's not so good as my mansion."

And so she was not surprised, though at first she was worried and hostile, when the holders of the mortgages proposed to solve their problem in the same way. Raffle off her beloved mansion? She would never let it go. No, much as the thought of a lottery excited her, she would never consent to it. "Look here now," they said, "the house and everything is worth, say, one hundred thousand dollars. We'll get out forty thousand tickets at two dollars and fifty cents, and give you a thousand and keep a thousand ourselves. Even if you lose, you'll have about sixty thousand dollars clear, and with that you could rent the mansion from the winner and carry out your plan."

"I'll never," she said, "never let my mansion go."

"But you might win it?" they persisted.

Win her own mansion? Her heart rose suddenly like a birring partridge. Her whole palace she could dangle before Nevada, only as a climax to jerk it back by the string grasped tightly in her own hand. "I'll let you

know to-morrow," she said, cautious even while the wings of her heart whirled on.

In bed that night, she consulted Sandy. "Take any chance," his blank, boyish face said; "you can't lose."

In the morning the gentlemen came again. "A thousand tickets you'll give me?" she said.

"Yes, a thousand," they repeated.

"And fifty for Persia?" she demanded.

"Well—yes, fifty for Persia," they laughed. It was arranged!

Early in 1873 display advertisements announced the "Bowers Mansion Grand Gift Entertainment." Eilley Orrum was once more coming into her own. "Gift!" Her bounty was spreading gifts before the whole Comstock. "Three hundred gifts!" those splendid advertisements offered, "including the celebrated Bowers Mansion, the most elegant residence in the State of Nevada, substantially and elegantly furnished from parlor to kitchen, together with carriage-house, large dancing-hall, bath-house, dove house, greenhouse with boiler and pipes, and a large lot of choice flowers, and all necessary outbuildings, valued at thirty thousand dollars." The oil paintings, many of them by Hill, the notices explained, would be divided into separate gifts, and also the silverware and diamonds, which were of the finest water selected in Europe. Yet tickets sold so slowly that Mr. Thompson, who had married a stepdaughter of Mr.

Lake, had to delay the drawing. Few people seemed to want the mansion as a gift.

Eilley was impatient, torn between desires for many to buy chances and for no one to win those possessions which after a decade seemed almost inherited. Now that she had decided on the lottery, God seemed strangely dilatory. What if the lottery should come to nothing? Still, many people were coming to inspect the mansion, and once more she was showing off her treasures. "Diamonds, bracelets, pins," she held the notice in her hand and read off the inducements to them, "earrings, buckles, Boston studs, sleeve buttons and finger rings." They looked at them all and marveled at her taste. "Fruit stand, coffee urn, vegetable dish," it was as if she were throwing fine honest words like pearls into a far-off sea with little splashes, "egg stand, cups and spoons, dining-room and bedroom sets, fruit and cake baskets, castors," she fairly sang the list, though she found their poetic rhythm hard to fit to a consecutive tune.

"You have everything, Mrs. Bowers!" her visitors would exclaim.

"Yes, everything," she would admit, and go on with the enumeration: "Billiard table and fixtures, French clocks, mounted terrestrial globes, finest bronze and other lamps, statues, statuettes, Bohemian and porcelain vases with flowers and globes, ebony writing case,

Brussels parlor rugs, the whole comprising the most superb assortment of articles of vertu ever collected in the state." Thus she displayed her frosted cake to the excitable chance lovers, only that by the grace of fate she might keep it in the end.

"The whole scene, Mrs. Bowers," a lady would say as Eilley escorted her to the door, "is one of perfect enchantment."

Nevertheless as the time set for the delayed drawing approached, less than half the tickets had been sold, and the concert again had to be deferred. "As a guarantee of the fairness of the enterprise," new advertisements pleaded, "the management is permitted to refer to His Excellency Governor Bradley, Hon. Jerry Schooling, State Treasurer, Hon H. R. Whitehill, State Mineralogist." To Eilley it was as if the nobility of her empire were at last rallying around their uncrowned sovereign. With some reason she hoped that the drawing would never be held. What could Mr. Thompson do? He might merely keep the money. He might return it to the chance holders and keep the mansion. He had removed the silver hinges, lock plates, and door-knobs, and found them plated. Eilley had distinctly told the silversmith in Paris to make them solid, but now people said she had not paid enough for that. Could she lose her mansion after all? Sandy had advised her to take any chance, and Sandy could never be wrong. Almost every night

she saw him in this period of anxiety, but for some reason he did not seem talkative.

On the last possible day Mr. Thompson came to a conspicuously just decision. He would let the unsold tickets participate in the drawing. That afternoon few came to the concert through the autumn cold. Three thin maiden ladies from Carson played on her piano and sang, for Mrs. Bowers had insisted that the concert should be respectable. Then the tickets were slowly drawn from a great wood box that had been placed beneath Sandy's portrait. The lesser prizes were disposed of first. Among the first numbers was one of Persia's precious fifty, and it drew a vinegar cruet.

"But, mother," she objected at once, "I thought I was going to get the dove house, I'd rather have the dove house."

"Hush, Persia," Eilley, tense with anticipation, chided her, "you have to take what comes."

At that Persia trotted out into the cold, and Eilley, transfixed to the throne chair, could hear her saying over and over to the pigeons, while the drawing continued, "You're all mine, mine, mine!" A ticket held by an absent gentleman drew some of the diamonds. The ticket of a loose woman, also absent, drew the terrestrial globes. A mahalie drew the billiard-table, and a Chinaman the rosewood piano. Most of the other small prizes went to unsold tickets. As the grand prize approached,

Eilley looked in beseeching misery up at the portrait of her late husband.

"Sandy, Sandy," she implored him in her mind, "don't leave me, don't leave me now," but he made no answer. It was an unsold ticket that drew the mansion.

Mrs. Bowers had a right to be elated. The mansion with its mortgage reduced to ten thousand dollars was restored to her ownership, and that amount of cash was put at her disposal for the development of her intelligent plan. Her books had been taken away by a self-conscious, puzzled miner who confessed that he could not read; but she had not read them either. The objects of vertu were practically intact. Now, turning the mansion into a resort, she would entertain with the peculiarly inspired irresistibility which would establish for all time her preeminence in Nevada. The phantom of Sandy had indeed been wise in instructing her to take any chance.

CHAPTER TEN

1

DURING the winter while Mrs. Bowers had many alterations to direct and many purchases to make against the opening of her resort, she realized the more how right Sandy had been in impelling her forward. Now that the contemptible Sharon's Virginia and Truckee Railroad was finished, every one was eager to ride on it, though she herself had not dared. In the summer a Masonic picnic had gone to Donner Lake near the Sierra summit, but that was too far away. Not only the Masons, Odd Fellows and their like, but the amateur militia, the National Guard, the Washington Guard, the Sarsfield Guard, had regalia to display. An Emmett Guard paraded in a blue suit with a dark green feather. A Champion of the Red Cross, strictly temperance, consoled himself with black velvet trimmed in silver bullion fringe and lace, while his apron spread in the center a red cross with as many stars as he had taken degrees. An officer sported a wide velvet sash with a solid silver emblem, and a lady officer wore a ribbon scarf of red,

white and blue. The Pacific Coast Pioneers, moreover, had organized and warmed into dispute over admitting members, for the original settlers had been mainly Mormons now in disfavor. All these lodges might well be grateful to gambol on her grounds.

Buying a stout croquet set in Virginia City, Eilley listened to Mr. Lynch tell of young boys running away on the railroad, hiding in empty box-cars or under the cow-catcher. "Excitement and romance, that is what our young men want," he said there in the hardware store; "down below in San Francisco they black boots on Montgomery Street until they are caught and restored to their heart-broken parents. Your resort will be a fine thing for them, ma'am, a very fine thing. Why last week two young gentlemen of fourteen," his phrases flowed on, "eloped from Silver City with married ladies. Though they have now returned, somewhat sadder—and wiser, I hope, the absconding females remain at large." With a pang of her old incompleteness Eilley remembered that her own John Jasper would have been fourteen this year.

Persia must have the advantage of the best Reno schools, she had reluctantly decided, distrustful at first that there could be any good away from home. Had not Tessie expired before they reached London, and Sandy encountered danger alone in Gold Hill? Yet if Julia Bulette, that harpy, had not existed, tempted men and

died, Sandy might never have become so dependably immortal. Finally boarding the splendid train with Persia, Eilley realized that on such an easy means of transportation they might some day go together to be actually presented to Queen Victoria. When she had left her last poor child safely in Reno with friends, she was so pacified that on the return she dared go straight through to Carson to purchase rope for swings. There she opulently stayed overnight at the hotel.

Sunday morning she awoke before dawn, aware, with her first conscious breath, that in the night Sandy had said through the meager hotel mirror, "Money, all you want is coming to you," and, with her second, that the Chinaman who had taken away her rosewood piano lived in Carson.

"He has no need for a piano," she thought, "I might find him and give him ten dollars for it."

Unable to sleep more, she put on her refurbished Parisian gown of magenta with broad white stripes, and ventured into the street, to find her way to Chinatown while no one was about, so that later she might go there boldly to make her offer. Alas, though only the first daybreak sparkled on the thin new snow in the mountains, there were people already about. Hurrying, looking straight ahead, shutting her ears, she soon discovered Chinatown and was about to return when she found that the people whom she had vaguely seen in the

street had followed her—a company of fifty swarthy, foreign-looking men was, in fact, advancing upon her, with a flag, a fife and a drum, and they were armed with rifles. She would have run, had her magenta skirt with the stripes been suitable for such an unladylike procedure, had there been any way of escape except into the bowels of those Chinese shacks. She stepped around a corner plastered with yellow paper that crawled with Chinese characters, and peered at the men in condescending aloofness. She knew she was caught.

Then a certain chagrin when they paid no attention to her incongruous figure changed to a keen interest in their peculiar behavior, as they marched to a shack opposite and banged on the door. Getting no immediate response, waiting not even a decent interval, they proceeded to crash it in with a broadax. Singularly quiet in efficient intensity the company seemed, in spite of the blows, the tapping of the drum and the tooting of the fife which had not yet brought out the sleepy townspeople. These dark men, knocking up Chinamen, could play music while they did it! From shack after shack they drove the silent, docile inmates, and cast after them clothes, bedding, long pipes, strange stringed instruments—good God, Sandy, they'd get her piano!—skillets, bamboo boxes, and things unspeakably nameless to Mrs. Bowers. In a wagon they tossed these belongings, but the rosewood piano did not make its appear-

ance. Then they forced into the wagon at the point of their rifles some thirty men and three women, shivering and dumb with horror.

Eilley, too stricken to move, wondering palely that such things could be, watched the wagon rumble away toward the sage-brush. Through the clear morning air she could see it for a mile or more. At length it stopped, and all it contained was dumped out on the desert, where the celestials were left to cower in blankets behind an old stone wall, which the men kindly allowed them. As the mob returned, Mrs. Bowers preceded them with as much of an air of propriety as she could muster in her semi-petrification and her skirts. Why hadn't she stayed in that good hotel bed for which she had spent half a dollar? With their flag, fife and drum more blatant, the company paused at the court-house and, amid the excitement of the now aroused townspeople, gave three cheers for their leader.

"Served the heathen right!" a gentleman near Eilley was exclaiming. "Fall had no business to give 'em white men's jobs at the mill," another said, but, "They're a-saying they can't be fined more than ten dollars apiece," and still another was shouting, "Where the hell's the sheriff?"

That morning Mrs. Bowers was far too shocked to partake of breakfast at the hotel. With all the heart she had left she knew that a lady's place was in her own

home. So, dithering and sickened almost to nausea, she repaired at once to the railway station where she sat on the platform, with her two great bundles of rope one on each side of her, to await the earliest train. Both rosewood piano and money would have to come back to her of their own accord. She must give the men of Nevada better Sabbath amusements than rioting. Thank God, she had escaped with her own life and, she reassured herself, her reputation.

After that indiscretion, she would have renounced the railroad for ever, had she not found it necessary to visit Virginia City again in the spring to place the advertisement for her resort with Mr. Lynch. She really ought to patronize the vehicle which would bring the world to her gates. In his printing shop Mr. Lynch informed her with a sad sprightliness that there had been on the Comstock that week three murders.

"Monday a desperado," he said, "whose name is not at my command, quarreled with a man named Griffen and beat him so over the head with a six-shooter that he lay in an insensible condition until death supervened." He paused while Mrs. Bowers wondered if "supervened" meant "came down like a curtain." Then he continued, "And this morning in the El Dorado Matt Redding shot Barney Kinney four times—in the right side just below the ribs, through the fleshy portion of the right leg, in—ah—the groin and bladder, and in the right thumb. Your

resort, ma'am, can't open too soon. Both gentlemen belonged to the sporting fraternity." These parlous times which she had long foreseen were indeed a suitable setting for her worthily planned endeavors.

As she went up the street to see Louisa, a spanking pair of horses before her eyes knocked down one gentleman and made another turn a somersault and fall full length in the mud. On the very next corner a donkey had overturned an ice-cream cart so that quarts of the thick white stuff were oozing through the dirty slush.

"What was the third murder?" she asked Louisa; "Mr. Lynch said there were three." Louisa gazed at the ceiling while she tried to recall. "Oh," she said, "that must have been the little Chinaman with a butcher knife who cut the artery in the leg of a big nigger cook." Eilley had had quite enough of Chinamen, killed or killing. And on the way to the railroad station she saw where the earth, settling from the excess of polished civilization above and the equal excess of stopping underneath, had cracked open for quarter of a mile.

2

It was amid these sinister but propitious circumstances that Mrs. Bowers threw open her estate on May Day, thirty-two years after that conversion by a Saint in Cannon which had led so unerringly through many ob-

stacles to the often disconcerting glory of Nevada. Her first guests were the elaborate Champions of the Red Cross. She wished that Persia in Reno and Sandy on the granite shelf might have shared this fresh pomp, but they had never been much for parties, and Sandy certainly not for a party without refreshments of the utmost strength. At this opening picnic the chief refreshment proved to be an address by Grand Commander Hoole. Yet Eilley found all the ladies and gentlemen anxious to vie with one another in extending those special courtesies and amenities which, she felt, tend so much to strengthen and elevate the moral tone of society. After the address, the hundred or more guests—and she was especially grateful for the presence of the ladies—occupied themselves with feasting, dancing, love-making, and other manifestations of temperance and good breeding. For Mrs. Bowers it was a restful, happy, though small, day in her lonely life of waiting since the loss of her mine. Far greater days, she knew, must soon follow. Indeed, the very next Saturday the Pacific Coast Pioneers were to hold their First Grand Annual Rural Entertainment.

For their consummate affair the National Guard of Virginia City had kindly offered its services as escort of the day. Perfect safety and strict order were to be secured by special conductors and guards on the train, and by a large and efficient force of deputy sheriffs and

special policemen, under the command of the sheriff of Washoe County and selected from the Pioneers themselves. In fact, every one was to have a uniform or badge and to be intrusted with looking out for the welfare of every one else. No improper or objectionable characters were to be allowed on the train or grounds. Ladies from the white cabins and men suspected of an inclination toward manslaughter would be unwelcome.

At eight on that promised day five bumptious locomotives, with shining brass-bound bellies and balloon smoke-stacks, tooted and poured forth wood-fumes, and amid the buckling of couplings and the rousing cheers of miners going on shift, the twenty jammed flat cars moved. Later Louisa and many others told Eilley the details of that resounding journey. Three bands blared, flags flew, children yowled and sang, and plump females lurched. From every mine and mill in Virginia City thin sirens shrieked. While the train rolled slowly through the tunnel and over the divide to Gold Hill where ten or more cars were added, the steam whistles of the Belcher, Caledonia and Knickerbocker hoisting works kept up a lively din as long as the happy excursionists remained in sight. In front of the Rock Island mine farther down, the superintendent, ex-Governor Blasdel, had his working forces drawn up in line of battle and ordered a salute as the gay gondolas sped past at fifteen miles an hour. At the principal stations of the

railroad, crowds collected and greeted the excited jaunters with the wildest demonstrations of joy, and at Carson City still other cars were attached. The Pioneers were determined for one day to be as untrammelled as when they had crossed the plains. In all, between four and five thousand people were escaping for one June day from the hornblende and porphyry hills of the Comstock, and doing it in the traditional Comstock grand manner.

When Eilley saw the gondolas jerk over the hump at Lakeview, near jets of water from the joints of the new inverted siphon which carried under the valley the flume from the Sierras, she stationed herself on the porch to welcome this greatest throng she had ever entertained. Each one as he or she was presented by the president of the Pioneers she would shake by the hand and bid make himself or herself at home. Now the train was actually stopping at the end of her lane, having covered the thirty miles in three hours. She was ready, nay hot with anticipation, for a long orderly single file of respectful pilgrims. Yet even as she watched them disembark, a formidable commotion seemed to develop. Indeed, the charm of the whole prospect, which had so captivated her when she had come with the Olive Branch, seemed to unnerve these picnickers eager to enfold to their hearts the real country. The temperate Champions of the Red Cross had not detrained thus. With lunch baskets, rifles, bows

and arrows, with whoops and with leaps, the five thousand, men, women and children, rushed up the lane as nearly at once as they could. For an instant Eilley was as terrified as when the mob had ransacked Chinatown. This mob was much larger, but she would stand her ground and with simple gestures direct the torrent.

Raising her hand she began her little speech: "There are plenty——" But she might as well have been speaking against the Washoe zephyrs. Calling and screeching, hearing nothing, they scrambled among her pines and poplars, brushed against her Scotch broom just coming into flower, fought tooth and claw for the best tables. She lifted her voice: "There are plenty of tables," she said, and a few glanced up. "Barrels of ice water," she went on in such a tone as she imagined Queen Victoria might have used, but her voice sounded shrill and small in the turmoil, "have been distributed about the premises for the accommodation of my guests." Perhaps five hundred paused to look, to listen, and even to cheer. "And other accommodations," she wavered on thinly, "of all kinds and the very best have been provided within the mansion." At that the entire five hundred, finally aware of who she was, shouted with understanding lustiness and dashed for the porch. Crumpling inwardly at such a consequence of her kind regal greeting, she hesitated, then turned while her plump legs still held her, fled through the front door, and locked it after her.

In a moment, however, while she panted inside on her throne chair, Louisa entered by the back way to assure her there was no further danger and remind her that she had promised to throw open the entire place. She was soon able to do so in safety, for most of her guests had already fallen to eating. The three bands, moreover, those of the Washington and National Guards and a band from Carson in zouave uniforms, had begun to reinspire and soothe the merry-makers. In fact there was no lack of music for on the porch Virginia City's artists, consisting, Louisa said, of the electricity man and one or two others, picked their banjos also, much to the delight of the listeners. Then Eilley let in a gigantic highlander from Empire who stood on the upper balcony and piped old familiar airs for the delectation of his, and her, countrymen. And when she at length ventured out again, she was enheartened to see her stolid friends, the Piutes, lounging about the grounds to seize upon discarded fragments of the lunches.

With these thousands appreciating the loveliness of the estate which her persistent foresight of twenty years had nurtured, Mrs. Bowers was shortly in her element as she had never quite been at her less public parties. Among the wandering throng whose wilder instincts seemed somewhat subdued by food, she traped hither and thither, beamed, received congratulations, and answered questions. Of course she could not properly

sit, save in the mansion. There she had one tormenting moment when, of all people, the fashionable Mrs. Killigrew flashed through the doorway.

"What a collection!" exclaimed Mrs. Killigrew, "but I understood you had a fine rosewood piano."

"I—have," Mrs. Bowers groped for the right afflatus, "but I found the air here was—too dry for it, and so I sent it below for a little while, for safe keeping."

That seemed enough to send on Mrs. Killigrew with a flea in her ear, and soon Eilley was showing about other less memorable ladies. One, sticking her nose into the library, which Eilley had turned into an unobtrusive bar, for even her plan contemplated that gentlemen must drink, asked suddenly, "Your books? What has become of all your lovely books?"

Again Mrs. Bowers hesitated. "Well, Mr. Bowers did have quite a saloon—sallong—of them," she said, "but I knew my guests would enjoy the outdoor air more than reading, and so I used the room, when I had the mansion made over, for—for something else." Her advisers had pointed out that the blue frieze of Diana and her nymphs made just the right setting for the bottles.

Later she retired to her second-story parlor to give discreet sittings before her peep-stone. Her head ached with a soft delirium, and in the ache small figures like old acquaintances spiritualized composed themselves, uttering such mystic words as "fire" and "hell." Though

the output of the Comstock had risen again for a year or more, since Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien had united the Best and Belcher and other mines into the Consolidated Virginia, there had been another slump and stocks had gone into an alarming decline. "I predict a rise," Eilley said affably to one after another.

"To what do you ascribe your gift?" they would ask.

"My mother was a seventh daughter," she would reply, preening herself, "of the oldest royal Scottish line, and now Mr. Bowers is always near me, coming to me whenever I need to know what to do." To that point she must give exactly the right shading, amid their "You-don't-says!" for Louisa had reported some months before that a story of a spirit in her upper room had gone around Virginia City, and that Mr. Piper had laughed it off by telling customers at his bar that a Mr. Dan De-Quille had started it after taking catnip tea late at night with oysters. Her vivid Sandy a product of catnip tea! "Yes, Mr. Bowers is always near me," she would repeat, "and he directed me to open the mansion for his old friends and their friends and the public generally, and he hopes you will all be much at your ease."

Throughout the afternoon the flying horses served immensely to please the little ones, who also indulged in leap-frog. The ladies played croquet, joined in the archery contest, or just ate a little more. The men of the National Guard kindly gave an exhibition of their skill

at target practise. They also ate. And every one danced in the new hall a hundred feet long that Eilley had had carpenters erect beyond the trees, and every one basked in the smile of the landscape at which no one much looked. To Eilley's regret, few bathed. Then at about half past three, while the merry-makers collected their baskets, she beheld through the window a young lady fall into the heart-shaped inlet of her nicest pond. She would ruin the goldfish! But before Mrs. Bowers could reach the hullabaloo, the young lady had been recovered—in time to catch the train back at four o'clock. In the afterglow of that stupendously successful rural entertainment Eilley spent the entire night not merely talking with Sandy but in his arms.

3

From the affair, however, the Pioneers had taken in about a thousand dollars less than their expenses, and Mrs. Bowers had gained only a hundred dollars or so and a suffused sense of virtue. She began to encounter much competition and other worriments. In the wild Gold Canyon where less than twenty years before she had been the pioneer of pioneers, the Comstock enjoyed in rapid succession a grand wrestling tournament, horse-races in the sage-brush, and the "Montgomery Queen's Great Show, with an African Eland, an Abyssinian Ibex,

Cassowaries, Rosa Cockatoos, the Cabia Bara or Water Hog, and the Only Female Somersault Rider in the World." Major Ferrend had lost more money in the decline of the stocks. Mr. Sutro, fiercely defending his tunnel against all the vested interests including now even Mr. Jones who had become United States Senator at the unnecessary cost of half a million dollars, was still engaging the attention of the miners with his charges that Sharon had a pile of six hundred cords of wood, the profits from which he used to pay newspaper liars. At Webber Lake a hundred miles away in the Sierras there were bear hunts, and in the near-by hills dove hunts, while every Wednesday and Saturday evening in Gold Hill there was good cock fighting. Even the churches were being enlarged, and Mr. Lynch assured Eilley that "Our people are fast becoming decently, not bigotedly, religious." Nevada lacked only the big bonanza which, like a desert mirage, was always just ahead. To keep the region in hand Mrs. Bowers must arrange her effects with more striking emphasis.

It seemed best that Persia, during all this business activity, should remain for the summer at that good boarding-place in Reno. After each triumph Eilley wrote to her in phrases suited to her comprehension. Aware that she was the only literary member of the whole Bowers family, she yet found letter writing painful and hazardous, fraught with ambushed but suspected

pitfalls. Spelling firmly, she respected neither punctuation nor capital letters, save that these made good beginnings for her names. Only in the writing of her name with fine free flourishes could she take real pleasure. Thus in one midsummer lull she addressed her adopted daughter:

“bowers mansion

“14 july 1874

“my dear child

“I am informed you are well and the fever in reno abating I pray to God pearl parker your friend regains health and beauty I have been much occupied with important picnics all say how well I do and admire the fine furnishings your dear pa chose and brought from europe now they talk of good times coming on the comstock again with rich pay streaks on every side soon I will be rich again a million dollars a year I always had I will not write you another letter I will come and fetch you for the sunday school picnic and pearl parker your friend

“your loving mother and true friend

“mrs bowers

“Ellison Orrum Bowers”[with many flourishes.]

The day after she dispatched that letter, Eilley was summoned to Reno. Persia was ill. For twelve years that inexplicable child had lived near her affections but not quite near enough to feel their heat. Now she had caught the scarlet fever from which so many other Reno

children had recovered. In the hot gloom of a squat house on West Street, Eilley was tempted to throw her success to the winds and flee from Nevada for ever. On July eighteenth Persia died. Next day she was buried on the granite shelf beside Sandy, John and Theresa. The flame of Eilley's passion for children, which had never really reached Persia, darted out in a last futile attempt to animate her in the grave.

"Mr. Bowers always likes Persia to be near him," she laughed wildly to Louisa in the mansion after the funeral.

"You must compose yourself," Louisa, weeping, admonished her.

"Mr. Bowers loves Persia," Eilley went on chattering; "Mr. Bowers needs all the little spirits for his great work."

"Don't—don't take on so," Louisa implored.

"I needed another spirit," Eilley cried and laughed; "people may call me the Washoe Seeress now if they wish. Mr. Bowers and Persia both say I may use that name. I shall be well known as the Washoe Seeress."

A week later the united Sunday-schools of Virginia City and Gold Hill held at the mansion the picnic which Eilley had promised Persia in that letter which Persia had never read. That day Eilley choked with a ravening secret joy that for once she had upon her grounds almost all the children she could wish. Football on the green,

fishing by the little ones, copenhagen, and the like, were indulged in until a late hour in the afternoon. None of the little ones actually caught any of the goldfish, and by four o'clock they were gone, leaving only the full memory of their ephemeral teeming. Eilley spent most of that evening sobbing comfortably to herself.

4

For the Grand Picnic Excursion of the Virginia Miners' Union Mrs. Bowers quickly redoubled her old enthusiasm. To sustain and quiet her Louisa kept her informed of the progress of the preparations. "They say that everything," Louisa wrote, "ingenuity, patient and enduring care can suggest or do will be done for the comfort and pleasure of the Union's guests, for committees have been at work." At seven o'clock one evening a few days before the picnic, Louisa also said, the Union formed in line on B Street and, headed by the Washington Guard band, marched to the divide where they met the Gold Hill and Silver City unions and escorted them back to their hall. Arriving there, they found the lower hall would not suffice, and the upper hall was thrown open. Appropriate speeches were made by the prominent officers, toasts of the happiest character were drunk, and songs were sung by glee clubs and others. Thus the supremely male miners advertised a far greater day than the Pioneers could ever have conceived.

When the horde arrived, Eilley remained within the house, not only during the feasting but during the athletic sports afterward. From her window she dolefully watched a slow race on donkeys which had been transported to the mansion in the cars with the ladies and little ones. The last donkey in won the stakes, Louisa explained, and no man could ride his own animal. She smiled a little at the blindfolded wheelbarrow race for ladies, but her temporary enthusiasm seemed to have utterly subsided. From time to time gentlemen with whom she had long been acquainted came in to tell her proudly that elsewhere on the grounds there was a friendly match of baseball for a prize bat of rosewood, prize waltzing in the pavilion, kicking the football on the green, sack racing and pitching quoits. "In a word," Mr. Lynch said, "the amusements of the day are limited only by the capacity of your grounds and the endurance of the Union's guests." Yet it did not cheer her even when they said that in the archery shooting several of the ladies shut their eyes when twanging their bows and consequently caused considerable hilarity by not hitting the target at all. "A Piute watched the shooting very attentively," Mr. Lynch wandering in again told her, "and expressed a desire to compete for the prizes, but they barred him."

In the middle of the afternoon they brought to her the injured young daughter of a Mr. Corley. Carrying

her in his arms, he had turned his head aside, and in that instant one of the swings had struck her in the temple. It was thought that her skull was fractured, but in the entire concourse there was no physician. Eilley herself bound up the small head which proved to have been soft enough to withstand the shock. After that she at length again threw open the mansion. Even as she did so, a boy fell into one of the ponds, and a gentleman, attempting to rescue him, cut his foot badly on a broken bottle in the pool.

Now Mr. Lynch fairly fumed. "The ice-cream man with his donkey cart," he said, "the dispenser of electricity, the corn doctor, the one-legged soldier with his hand organ, they're all here, ma'am, but not a single physician."

"It is my intention," Eilley told him, "to lease the mansion and leave Washoe Valley for a time." His buzzing in and out had been more than she could stand.

While the miners, their wives and children trooped through the rooms, she followed them from one object of vertu to another, cold with dread. Her treasures were her only children now. At the incessant thought of Persia, she feared that she was going into a chill. She made many of her guests as fidgety as herself, and on this which should have been a perfect day, kept her ghost room closed. Leaving by the rear, they were glad to climb to the gravelly ledge near the trickling hot springs,

where boulders like melons marked the graves. On this ledge the sportive miners, *en famille*, meditated uneasily on the impossibility of observing any scenery for more than three minutes consecutively.

The next day Mr. Lynch said right in his paper: "Every one acquainted with the kind old lady, Mrs. Bowers, will sympathize with her in her misfortunes. Since the death of her only remaining child, Persia, she has been almost crazed with excessive grief, and some consider that it will take months if not years to efface from her memory the sad scenes through which it has been her lot to pass." A kind old lady! Those condolatory words stabbed her, for she was but forty-seven.

For many evenings after the Miners' picnic the sky was bright with meteoric portents. Then a fly-wheel in the Belcher mine of Messrs. Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien, those prospering Irishmen, burst and killed a number of men who had not patronized her resort which she had so hoped would once and for all purify the Comstock.

"No, I will not lease the mansion," she told Mr. Thompson, who had grown uneasy over what the meddling Mr. Lynch had passed on to him; "I will add more rooms and make it finer than ever for the spring." He was willing to be patient and see what she could do.

Then a few days after the last excursion of the season, who should call on her but the trying Mrs. Killi-

grew? "On the morning after your last picnic," Mrs. Killigrew began, settling herself in one of Eilley's red plush chairs and lowering her voice, "Mr. Samuel Wilcoxon was shot in his saloon, which, they say, is full of pets, all kinds of monkeys, owls, foxes, wood-chucks," she listed them as if they had some black significance, "guinea pigs, rabbits, pigeons. It was half past three in the morning," she lowered her voice still farther, "and Mr. Wilcoxon was—conversing, they say, with a lady named Mrs. Dale."

"Julia Bulette!" Eilley groaned to herself.

"It was his bartender, an old gentleman named James Glaze, that shot him," Mrs. Killigrew gossiped on; "Mr. Wilcoxon saw him come through the door with a pistol and cried, 'Go back, Jimmy, go back, Jimmy,' but the bullet struck him in the nipple, and lodged—in the kidney. Mrs. Dale went for Mr. Wilcoxon's wife, but when the two ladies returned all they could do was get Mr. Keyes, the undertaker, to pack Mr. Wilcoxon's remains in ice, because the funeral is not to be until Sunday." She paused. "I think we ladies should do something," she said.

Do something! Hadn't Eilley been doing all she could to command the Comstock? "I will speak to my husband about it," she informed Mrs. Killigrew, who was so startled by that statement that she terminated her call with unseemly haste.

Mrs. Bowers knew that her genius must pervade all the impulses of the region, must exert itself in a larger way than through even such social affairs as the grand rural entertainments. The second sight on which she could unerringly depend would create for her a career so unusual that the world would hold its breath at the uncanny exactness of her foreknowledge. Before long she might incidentally have to undertake the detection and punishment of crime as part of her repertory. In any case the New York ladies who peeped and muttered, whose advertisements she had torn out of the newspaper on the steamship, but whose methods she had been unable to investigate because of her sudden adoption of Persia, were the merest amateurs beside her, Eilley Orrum, daughter of all the immemorial Scottish kings. She must show the people of the Comstock how to achieve that more than enough which would extinguish every unworthy instinct. She had kept her mansion in spite of every attempt to wrest it from her. Now she would take the next stately step. She would definitely predict a big bonanza. Since Mrs. Killigrew's abrupt departure, her head had seemed too cramped to contain the full-bodied angels eager to guide her.

5

Toward the end of September she journeyed to Virginia City, and, in the congenial setting of Louisa's par-

lor where Mr. Lynch had been asked to meet her, she straightway went into a silent trance and had a vision. As she came out of that condition, the alarmed Mr. Lynch tried to give her water, insisted that he ought to do *something*, but she assured him that she was quite able to take care of herself. Louisa, of course, was not even surprised.

"And did you see anything about the mines?" Mr. Lynch inquired nervously.

"I was shown many things in regard to the Comstock lode," she announced.

"What were you shown?" he leaned forward to the edge of his chair.

"The greatest mines," she said, "will soon be at the north end of the vein." Northward had always been her favorite direction, but for years the old Bowers claim had been miles south of the later developments. Major Ferrend had especially consulted her about the Ophir and the Consolidated Virginia, concerning which, he said, Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien were very secretive.

"Not south near the Bowers mine?" Mr. Lynch asked.

"No, I was not a little astonished to see the greater bonanza toward the north."

"And what would you advise?" he inquired with the respect due a seeress.

"If I were blessed with ready money," she vouchsafed, but did not add that she had come to Virginia City prepared to raise some, "I would put every cent of it into mines in that direction, beginning at the Ophir and going northward. Immense deposits of ore were shown me in that quarter of the vein." As a seeress, she must make her language truly oracular.

"To what do you lay your second sight?" he asked in the habitual phrasing of a news-gatherer.

"My forefathers were all seers of great repute in the highlands of Scotland where I was born," she declared, and then after a momentous pause she advanced to her highest peak: "I am the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter," she lied.

The trance and the interview had been all that such things should be. Much impressed, Mr. Lynch published two days later the first feature article with which Mrs. Bowers was honored. He reported accurately his queries and her pronouncements, and concluded conservatively, "Many persons have a great deal of faith in her gift of second sight, and as she predicted the great fire in the Gold Hill mines and other things in regard to the Comstock, they are inclined to believe that she is not guessing as to what she now says about the mines to the north." At last Eilley's long consecration to the good of humanity was getting a measure of recognition. The ultimate climax, she knew, was approaching.

The next morning she sallied forth bearing a bundle to visit a broker and raise the money with which to play the stock market. No more would she bother with Mr. Sharon or Mr. Thompson. At a Jewish gentleman's she unwrapped the parcel and revealed to him her knives, forks and spoons from Paris. With these alone would she daze him this morning; another day she might bring the larger pieces.

"They are worth six hundred dollars," she said, "but I will sell them for half their value."

He took one of each into his rear cubby-hole and made an examination. "They're plated," he announced on his return.

"They are not plated," she said with precision; "they were made by the best Parisian silversmith, out of bullion from my mine."

"He cheated you, lady," the broker insisted; "I'll give you twenty-five dollars for the lot."

"They are worth six hundred dollars," she repeated, "and I will let you have them for half that."

"No, no, lady," he grew fatherly; "I wouldn't take your silver, I couldn't do nothing with it."

So she went in dudgeon to assail another Jewish gentleman and another, but they all gave her the same answer. In a very lofty dudgeon indeed she was forced to return to Washoe Valley with her bundle intact, and without the Ophir stock which she had intended to buy.

Yet before she reached the mansion her anger gave way to her old tense equanimity, for destiny could not forsake her. Inside the door flashes of hot and cold like omens from the whole spirit world ran up and down her spine, and that night Sandy showed her exactly the new mine that she must locate in the sage-brush.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1

NORTHWARD the Comstock had dug on under that interminable canyon, and always deeper and deeper. The mines had produced thirteen millions in 1872 and twenty-one millions in 1873. Vaguely Eilley knew that in 1874 they must produce double that for the Nevada desert, condemned to inferiority for ages, to redeem itself by becoming the greatest resource of America. For her it had been a jagged, exhausting summer, but she had a rich relish for exhaustion. As she rested in the haven of her mansion after her courageous prediction of a bonanza, the jumble of life in Gold Canyon became more unfathomably complicated than ever. There had been all along a mixed something called politics that men went into. At Washington there was a Senate to which Mr. Jones had gone, and now Mr. Sharon was willing to spend more money than Mr. Jones in order to go there too, but fortunately her friend, Mr. Sutro, was opposing him. While stocks rose, fluctuated, and rose

again, Mrs. Bowers's mind expanded into Federal politics. As Mr. Sutro rushed here and there, talking incessantly about the election of the legislature in November, he now and then found relaxation in explaining a little of what her thought was venturing into.

"Sharon and the bank ving," he told her, "think they can buy the legislature. Sharon, he plans, he bluffs, he coaxes. They say he was a Quaker, but I never saw a Quaker like him. Vy, I find out through good friends of mine that he goes to Joe Stewart, the gambler, and he says, 'Joe, I vant you to help me among the men you know,' and he gives him a check for five thousand dollars. But Joe von't take it, and then Sharon, he plays poker with Joe all night, and he loses \$4,765! He, a Quaker!"

Major Ferrend, still seeking her spirited advice, analyzed somewhat for her Mackay and Fair and two other more distant gentlemen called Lucky Baldwin and William C. Ralston. "Ralston, a huge man, very impetuous," Major Ferrend said, "is president of the Bank of California, and he and Sharon, with their Union Mill and Mining Company have already made millions out of the Comstock. And now he's building a big Palace Hotel in San Francisco, it's cost a million for the foundations alone, and he's put money in a dozen other things, even a furniture company to furnish the hotel. I don't trust him. Now Mackay is different. Mackay is

unpretentious. Mackay isn't insulted when he's asked to drink in a one bit house."

"Is he for Mr. Sutro?" Eilley inquired, because her mind was now in politics.

"No, he's for Sharon, though he doesn't like him especially."

"Then don't buy any stock in Mr. Mackay's mines," Eilley warned him quickly.

"And Fair, he's a smooth one," the major went on; "he's been all over, Long's Bar, Angels' Camp, and all over, and he certainly knows mines and machinery, but he can be quiet and polite when he's mad all through."

"Is he for Mr. Sutro?" Eilley asked once more.

"No, he's for Sharon, like Mackay."

"Then don't buy any stock in Mr. Fair's mines."

"Well, Lucky Baldwin's just an outsider, and he buys their stock. They say he has about a tenth of it already."

"Buy no stock," she reiterated, "in the mines of Mr. Mackay and Mr. Fair."

Major Ferrend devoutly but reluctantly accepted her dictum, and bought only the smaller stocks, though the Consolidated Virginia of Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien certainly lay to the northward. For all her aversion, the stock of the Consolidated Virginia unaccountably rose. Above the brown horizon of her vision to the east, indeed, Mackay, Fair, Flood and

O'Brien, like cumulous clouds loomed in her mind even when she slept.

"Mackay and Fair," Major Ferrend came again, "are keeping some of their best miners underground all the time, have put up bunks for them in the upper levels."

"Pay no attention to that," Eilley ordered; "buy the stocks in the small mines. My mine was small, just twenty feet, and it made me a million dollars a year."

She had withdrawn her mental support from the Ophir, upon finding out that it was controlled by Jones, Ralston and Sharon. Yet by the end of October the Consolidated Virginia stock had passed 100. In the excitement, as tremendous as if an earthquake had revealed a solid core of silver under that tantalizing earth crust, Eilley had quite forgotten about the election.

"Sharon thinks he's got the legislature," Mr. Sutro informed her, "but ve vill see, ve vill see."

"The Con. Virginia," Mr. Lynch remarked one day when he paused at the mansion on his way to Reno, "seems to be opening up and laying bare the secrets of the northern end of the lode, which you, ma'am, so strongly favored."

"I favor the smaller mines now," she was dogged.

The stocks of the California and the Ophir were rising too, but those which Major Ferrend had bought on her advice remained static. In Virginia City, the crowds on the streets, in the saloons, before the brokers' offices,

though they talked and swore and fought, were too overwhelmed by the speculation to develop striking new ways in which to express their emotions. Indeed, they were not yet sure that this was the big bonanza on which the future of Nevada had so long been waiting. Like an Indian summer when they had settled down to winter, it had crept upon them naturally and caught them almost unawares.

"They opened the Ophir to the public yesterday," Louisa Ellis told Eilley one afternoon in Washoe, "and any one who wished to descend they gave stogy shoes and clean overalls to. General Williams takes down all the theatrical celebrities himself."

"General Williams?" Eilley pricked up her ears, nearly reconverted to the Ophir by his name, for General Williams as attorney for Mr. Thompson had recommended the adventure of the lottery.

"Yes, and yesterday," Louisa went on with an odd rapture in her eyes, "he took down Mademoiselle Marie Zoe," it seemed as if she approved of that hussy, "the celebrated danseuse, actress and champion of the broadsword—in Turkish costume!"

At the moment, however, Eilley was less interested in Mademoiselle Zoe and her Turkish trousers than in the copy of the *Territorial Enterprise* which Louisa had brought. This paper had begun to accord to her wisdom the fame to which it was entitled, but which she rather

resisted now that it had come through the enrichment of Mr. Sharon and the Irish. In this issue an article said:

"It is beginning to look as though Mrs. Sandy Bowers was right when she said that, exercising her gift of second sight, she could see far down in the earth at the north end of the Comstock lode vast and almost inexhaustible stores of ore of the richest character. There has already been opened an almost unbroken body of ore extending from near the Gould and Curry through the Consolidated Virginia, California and Ophir. . . . As for the Ophir it is now quite evident that its latter end like that of Job of old is to be more blessed than its beginning."

Having no stock and no money with which to buy any, though this good article almost rehabilitated the Ophir in her esteem, she must locate the claim which Sandy made so distinct to her inner eye. "I will soon come to Virginia City," she notified Louisa, "and look over all the ground."

When Louisa had gone, she decided that she must write a letter to Major Ferrend, but for a few days she delayed while from that distance she watched the stocks soar. In her stupefaction as they reached new heights, she knew that she must recant her advice to the major before it was too late for him to buy Ophir if not Consolidated Virginia. The afternoon when she sent the letter off, however, Louisa again arrived in a rare state of agitation.

“Major Ferrend was restless last night,” she began, almost in collapse against one of Eilley’s antimacassars, “and this morning his wife just went into the next room to tell a young lady there to stop the sewing-machine because it disturbed the major——”

“Louisa!” Eilley interrupted her, “what are you trying to say now?”

“When she came back,” Louisa took hours, it seemed, to tell it, “she found the major—had shot himself through the mouth.”

“There!” Eilley laughed hysterically, “I might have known no good could ever come from writing a letter.”

For an hour Louisa, as unsoothing this time as if she were possessed, sat there and recounted the details of the major’s life that had come to light. It seemed that he had graduated from the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, England, and gone as an ensign to Buenos Aires, where he had been a leader in a successful revolution. Then in 1855 he had raised a company to join General Walker on the Nicaragua expedition, on which he had received, Louisa emphasized, forty-eight body scars. “Those,” she said, “must have been what made him take his life. And in Camptonville down in California,” she hurried on, “he received another wound from an ax.”

“From an ax!” the trembling Eilley could only gasp, feeling as if she had herself wielded that horrible weapon.

"Yes, he'd had some trouble with a man, and they'd agreed that if they met again, they'd meet fighting. And one day this other man came, with the ax, into the saloon where the major was sitting in his shirt sleeves. The major just got up and drew his knife. And then the other man moved forward holding up the ax, and the major stood there and watched his eyes, and the major was all the time turning his wrist so the knife kept flashing. And then the man with the ax just looked down at the knife, and the major sprang at him and stabbed the knife through his heart so it stuck out at the back."

"At the back! But I thought you said," perhaps Eilley had not wounded him after all, "that the major received a wound from the ax."

"I was coming to that," said Louisa. "You see, the handle of the ax struck the major's shoulder, so the blade just went down and cut into his kidney. They fell on the floor together, so for a while the people around didn't know which one would die first. Major Ferrend," Louisa concluded triumphantly, "was the sole agent in Virginia City for the Vichy water."

Regardless of the Vichy water, Eilley knew in her heart that the major had died because she had written her letter too late. "I'll come to Virginia City, Louisa," she pleaded, as if that would in some way atone for her advising a man with forty-nine scars on his body; "I'll come to Virginia City, but not to the funeral."

The rise of the stocks was unaffected by the suicide's funeral in which the governor's staff headed the procession of the various guards on the now frenzied Comstock. Jim Fair, quiet and urbane even with his firmly guarded advance information as to just what the bonanza in the Consolidated Virginia was producing, and John Mackay, erect, alert, reticent, dreaming of world power, had worked up the stock to 400. Sharon, spending eight hundred thousand dollars on his campaign for the Senate, tipped off the public to get all the Ophir stock they could and hold it for 300. Ralston in San Francisco invested new millions in woolen mills, a carriage-manufacturing plant, a watch company, a tobacco plantation at Gilroy. Flood and O'Brien, the saloon-keepers, with their respectable intelligence and manners, also stayed in San Francisco and watched their fortunes grow. Montgomery Street went wild over the daily news from the Comstock which was now so thoroughly reviving the business of all California. Henry Wolf promptly took over Major Ferrend's saloon, announcing that business continued as usual and that he had just received a shipment of the celebrated Plantation Villa cigars, in shape a counterpart of the crooked V. and T. Railroad. Hundreds of men were drugged and robbed in the various dives of Gold Canyon.

Eilley Orrum, without either stock or mine, could but sit in her mansion, brood over the major with his

forty-nine unsuspected wounds, and fold on the knees of her great skirts the latest newspapers with their columns of empty homage. In the *Enterprise* she would read:

“A few months since we published the prediction of Mrs. Bowers, widow of Sandy Bowers, in regard to the north end of the Comstock lode. . . . Some months since she was in this city stopping at the house of an old friend. One day she startled the people of the house by informing them that she had been in the ‘second sight’ state, whatever that may be, and while in that peculiar condition had taken a look along the Comstock lode when, much to her surprise, she had seen immense bodies of rich ore in the vicinity of the Ophir. She further said that it extended a great distance beyond the Ophir to the north. In former times Mrs. Bowers and her husband were owners of one of the richest of the Gold Hill claims, the famous Bowers mine. This being the case she was naturally prejudiced in favor of the south end of the lode, therefore was not a little surprised when through her gift of second sight she saw such immense wealth at the north end of the lead. She had such faith in the vision that she urged all her friends to put every dollar they could raise into mines at the north end of the lead. She said that if she had any loose money she would risk it all in the place where her gift showed her the vast masses of ore. As things are now turning out, it would seem that the old lady’s second sight did not mislead her. She must have had a glimpse of the great bonanza running through the Ophir, California, Consolidated Virginia, with probably an extension through the Union Consolidated, Sierra Nevada, and Utah.”

As she read Eilley had to stop at sentence after sentence to persuade herself that the paper was really referring to her. In a few days the *Enterprise* modified its loyalty by noting that "the second sight which led Mrs. Bowers to divine a big body of ore at the north end of the Comstock or some other sight is leading several persons to seek a corresponding body at the south end." People could not go very far wrong in any direction. Still, the power of the press was far-reaching. Through it she was gradually converting this amazing rabble, with which she must be lenient, to the importance of her soothsaying. Fame could be its own reward until she located her new and unparalleled claim. She must ascend again to Virginia City.

2

On New Year's Day Mrs. Bowers boarded the train to present for the edification of her public another climax of her arduous career. This time she stayed with a Mrs. Hunt of the Williams and Bixler House whom she hoped to engage to help her at the mansion for the next season, and thus to leave her free for her greater work as the Washoe Seeress. Her climacteric performance began on the morning of the second after she had played casino with her friends until half past ten the previous evening. Very early that morning a gentleman who was a stranger to her called at the house. While she stood on the porch,

a visitor from the spirit land, like one of those hot flashes which she had entertained so often of late, came to her, introducing himself as Chips.

"Ask the gentleman," this phantasm urged her, "if he remembers Old Chips."

She at once went into the house and propounded the question. "Yes," the gentleman replied after a moment's thought.

"Ask him," her spirit control continued, "if he remembers about a gold specimen he dug out of the ground when we was mining in California."

Once more she audibly projected his interrogation.

"Yes," the gentleman again replied.

"How did I use to spend my money?" Mr. Chips persisted; "wasn't I fond of my liquors?"

Passing this on to the gentleman, she was assured that he was.

"Mr. Chips is a jolly, good-natured man," she described him to her unwitting client, "but slovenly in his habits and not inclined to pay much attention to the matter of personal cleanliness."

At this point her soiled spiritual friend interrupted her in a voice which she alone could hear. "Go ahead," he said, referring to a contemplated prospecting expedition; "I will be with you. I always was a lucky dog, and whether I am in heaven, on earth, or in hell, I'll be lucky in discovering mineral that is hid in the ground."

Much impressed and encouraged, the gentleman then favored Eilley with a corroborating account of the idiosyncrasies of this obliging wraith. "He got his sobriquet," the gentleman said, "from having been a ship carpenter. We mined together at Kanaka Creek, Sierra County, California, in 1852. He was a reckless, dare-devil sort of a fellow, slovenly in dress, greasy and dirty. I do not know that he ever gave any attention to his ablutionary duties, but he was the luckiest man I ever knew. He never worked more than a fortnight without making two or three thousand. Then he would get on the stage, go off to Sacramento or San Francisco, and spend it all drinking. When he got broke he would come back again. It was no trouble for him to find gold. He would go up into the craggy slate and dig nuggets out of crevices in the rocks."

As this conversation took place before breakfast, Eilley had made an excellent start for the day. She warmed to her task. Suddenly while she assisted in preparing the meal, a Doctor Gaston, who had died some time before, vibrated from the top of her spine into her brain.

"We want you to serve us," he said; "don't annoy yourself about your financial troubles; we will bring you out all right."

She did not really need a spirit to tell her that, but it was enheartening. In the parlor several gentlemen,

waiting for breakfast, were conversing about some claims which they intended to locate.

"Tell them," Doctor Gaston said clearly, "to call it the Seven Signs."

Eilley hastened to transmit to them this message, and was informed that they had indeed been discussing a name for their prospective mine, though she had not been aware that such was the nature of their business.

"Tell them," Doctor Gaston commanded unexpectedly, "that they are not right."

"Gentlemen," she was obedient, "you are not right." At this they were put into a quandary, as they did not know to what the doctor could possibly refer.

"I will give them a sign," the doctor said, "that they are not right."

There, for the moment, the matter rested. Why they were not right Eilley could not say, and the doctor remained enigmatical. After breakfast the gentlemen united in desiring her to go and see what she thought of the mines at the north end of the lode. She consented readily.

"I wish," she said, feeling that another great moment of her life had come, "to locate a claim for myself which was indicated to me by my spirit friends some months ago. The locality and its surroundings are so plainly mapped out in my mind that I know I can find the spot." This morning she would ascertain where the

culmination of her hopes lay. They set out and in a short time arrived at the Wells-Fargo mine situated about two miles northwest of the city.

"I predict," Eilley declared as they paused in their buggies, "that this will be one of the finest claims in the state of Nevada, although it will take some time to develop it." While they hesitated, she again listened to the counsel of her ethereal acquaintances. "I wish to go still farther on," she thereupon announced, "in a northeasterly direction." They accordingly proceeded, passing through the small valley in which the Wells-Fargo and other promising mines were situated, and up a little rise of ground. "We are now coming," she said at this point, "to ground which is owned by some one whose name is C. C. I do not know who it can be."

One of her spirit attendants then advised her: "It is good ground and is worth working. He must go ahead with it. Tell him this from Uncle John, but he won't believe it." She related this with a queer pleasant malice to the gentleman with her, but he could not enlighten her. So they inquired of another gentleman who had gone on ahead. "Whose ground is that?" she asked.

"General C. C. Batterman's," he replied.

"I am very much surprised," she said with gently heightened malice, "because I know the general is strongly opposed to spiritualism."

The party, proceeding with this continued dignity,

then divided, the three gentlemen who had received the name for their mine going down the hill to take up the ground. The remaining gentleman and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, started with Eilley along the Indian trail in a northwesterly direction. They traveled thus for a while when Mr. Bowers himself pressed from her neck to her cerebellum.

"Ma," he protested, "you're bearing too far to the northwest."

They changed their course and presently came to the spot which he had previously described to her. Her new mine! "I recognize it," she affirmed, "by that clump of willows and those three large piles of rock. The place is exactly as was described to me."

Mr. Hunt promptly set up a monument for her and affixed to it a location notice claiming fifteen hundred feet. "Eventually," she remarked, repressing her emotions with difficulty, "I shall have it recorded."

This event she must solemnize by some uncommon exhibition of the infinitude of her intercourse with the realms on high. Traveling on a mile and a half through the sage-brush, Mrs. Bowers became very much fatigued and sat down on a rock to rest. Immediately she went into a trance. Then she made the sign of the cross upon her forehead and breast, and sang a Catholic hymn in Latin. It was the spirit of a Catholic priest that then possessed her. Her companions were much agitated.

"You were never," Mrs. Hunt inquired when normal discourse was again possible, "a member of the Catholic church, were you, Mrs. Bowers?"

"I was not," said Eilley with unfeigned asperity.

"And you do not understand the Latin language?"

"I do not."

At that they marveled the more. After resting in the wonder of the experience for a few moments, they retraced their steps. When they had returned to the vicinity of the Wells-Fargo, they lingered before getting into the buggy.

"It is strongly impressed upon my mind," Eilley averred, "that at some future time a town will be built upon this locality. There is good ore underground all the way from the Sierra Nevada to the Wells-Fargo and beyond. There is plenty of ore in this locality all around, even underneath the old Catholic cemetery."

As she delivered this pronouncement against the Irish dead, there ascended from her spine to the center of her inward vision an old man who gave his name as something Russian which sounded like Zenavavitch, she could not be sure, but at any rate it ended with "vitch." "If the Sierra Nevada people," he said, "will work in their old ground where Bob Apple used to work, they will make a grand discovery by running in a westerly direction."

She relayed this dictum to her associates, and while

she did so, Mr. Vitch mentioned other parties with whom he wished to communicate, one of whom he said he wanted to make rich, but he wanted him to let whisky alone. As she did not know the parties referred to, she had to reserve this information until she could be apprised of their whereabouts.

"If any of you," she said to her companions, "should learn of people who knew a gentleman called Zenavavitch in his life, you can assure them that I am in possession of facts which they will find valuable."

At this moment she and the two others were rejoined by the three who had gone down the hill to locate the claim. "It was located yesterday by others," they told her in disappointment.

"Doctor Gaston said," she reminded them, "that he would give you a sign you were not right." Another period of exclamations ensued. "I am of the opinion," Eilley declared with earnestness as they drove slowly back to Virginia City, "that before a great while the International Hotel and the Williams and Bixler Building will be considered as in the southern portion of the city."

It was indeed a transcendent morning for Mrs. Bowers. The following day her friends sent for both Mr. Lynch and Mr. DeQuille. Their queries elicited from her the narrative of the whole experience which Mr. DeQuille especially jotted down for publication.

“But,” he questioned, “if you can predict for others, why don’t you predict for yourself and get out of your financial embarrassments?”

His desire for a full answer permitted her to relieve her mind, for publication, of a point that had rankled in it. “My circumstances have been such,” she responded, “as to prevent my following up any of these glorious predictions which my spirit friends have imparted to me. When Ophir was selling at thirty-three dollars a share,” she elaborated her statement specifically, “I tried to sell or hypothecate some silverware valued at six hundred dollars in this city, for the purpose of raising some money with which to buy Ophir. None of the brokers in the city were willing to purchase the silverware although I offered it at half its value; so I was compelled to return home again without carrying my purchase into effect. I do not wish,” she said with considerable sensibility, “any of my friends to purchase stock upon the strength of my predictions. I give them as they are given me. My only object is to benefit our people all I can.”

The *Enterprise*, owing to the extreme interest of the time in stock fluctuations, had taken to larger head-lines than had been its wont. One of the first of these emphasized, for the benefit of the people of the Comstock, the account of Eilley’s great day. “THE ‘SEERESS’ IN THE CITY” was the heading of the article which was all

that she in her wildest yearnings could possibly have wished. Hereafter her dominion over her subjects, for whom she had used such royal language, would be unquestioned. In Washoe Mr. Bowers once more thrashed about in the walnut bed which he had so seldom occupied in the last years before his decease.

3

Stocks had mounted until the Consolidated Virginia had passed 700, seven times the figure at which it had sold a little over two months before. The fortunes of Messrs. Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien had been multiplied. Though the fortune of Mr. William Sharon was likewise in a most flourishing state, Eilley could clearly foresee for him some degrading disaster. She, alas, remained impecunious, but she knew that it would be only for the nonce. Her general prediction had been fulfilled. As Horace Greeley had said, in the workings of Divine Providence, vast treasure houses were being revealed. Now the truly progressive needed but to pursue the line which her specific predictions indicated as to where to locate new claims. For the moment there seemed none progressive enough to do that. The old ground in the hands of the largest corporations continued to disgorge the silver.

Then the sane *Enterprise*, having so cordially ap-

proved of the powers and activities of the Washoe Seeress, felt that it was incumbent on it to explain that other factors might have been involved in the development of the big bonanza. In an editorial within a week after her triumph, it cautiously and with balance reminded its readers:

“There is something within the hands of every studious man which enables him with only his dim mortal eyes to follow the pointings of this mysterious hand and to read in the darkness of those unexplored depths the truth or fallacy of Mrs. Bowers’ second sight. That something men call science. It has made for man an alphabet out of the solid rocks, and has printed with stony types its rules upon the hills, which if man will but read, it is to his mind as if the periods of the world were one by one rolled back.”

It seemed that a Mr. W. Frank Stewart, a man of science, had published a prediction similar to Eilley’s some time before her first utterance on the subject. What had science to do with the guidance of destiny? The vengeance of fate for this blasphemy must be sudden and swift.

Though the Comstock was now producing more than forty million dollars a year, the stocks had risen to heights far out of proportion to any conceivable value of the mines even if the production should be doubled or trebled. Before the end of January there was such a

terrific crash that the speculators were reduced to the most miserable gloom. The controlling partners, being on the inside track and having distributed their wealth and stabilized their position, were but little hurt. The Ophir had not reached 300 in accordance with Mr. Sharon's tip, and he himself had sold short before the crisis approached. When the legislature met, Mr. Adolph Sutro's ambition was soon crushed, and William Sharon was elected to the United States Senate in the thick of the panic on the stock-market. Eilley, having lost sight of Federal politics, merely postponed for him the inevitable catastrophe.

At home in Washoe the panic seemed to her as unreal as the rise had been. The stocks, she knew, had slumped only as a penalty for the disparagement of her powers. Ore without limit lay untouched under the ground which she had indicated, and of that ground she had fifteen hundred good feet. If she and Sandy could realize a million dollars a year from twenty feet, how much could she alone take out of fifteen hundred? While she waited the proper time to develop that claim, and more settled conditions in the overwrought, despondent stock-market, she must apply herself to the betterment of her resort. On credit, for even carpenters had confidence in her now, she built a third story with dormer windows in place of the cupola, and an ell at the rear of the house, thus adding eighteen rooms. Then she, who had been so recently

hailed as the mentor of the Comstock, bravely sent out tasteful circulars soliciting summer boarders at twenty-five dollars a week.

Her head throbbed with spirits like gnomes until it often seemed as if they would split open that storehouse of varied designs of wisdom for all the world to behold. From the region of her waist the gnomes like jumping children skipped up the steps of her vertebræ and just above her neck exploded as if they had been blooming flowers. If she only had a husband, she could yet at forty-eight bear another child, but a fourth husband might mean more vanity and vexation than she could abide. In the resurgence of her old rending desires, nothing could be impossible.

It was small relief to her when in May Louisa, the devoted bearer of tidings, brought word that Mrs. Sharon, née Maria Ann Malloy, was dead. That was by no means enough punishment for her enemy. "They say she was a pretty girl when he married her," Louisa commented, "with a graceful form and a gentle nature," but Mrs. Bowers was not much interested. "Her features were very expressive, what I saw of them," Louisa went on anyway, "and her manners were certainly refined."

"Louisa," Eilley enjoined her, "I will thank you not to mention her further. He probably has a fancy woman somewhere already."

In the summer the picnics were disappointing, partly

because the veritable volcano of silver seemed every moment about to stifle the populace in the gases of speculation, and partly because an underhanded Mr. Treadway, who had gained admission to the Pioneers, had opened for excursionists his farm near Carson City. Yet Eilley got the cream of the trade, such as it was, though the Irish Emmett Guards did go to Treadway's ranch. With all the restraint of her royal blood, she welcomed the Episcopalian Sunday-schools, upon whom Mr. Lynch especially complimented her.

"You had an unusual attendance of ladies from the first circles, ma'am," he said at the end of the afternoon; "among such a gathering I look in vain for the little detractions and annoyances which, ah, too frequently find their way even into picnics, and detract so much from the enjoyment which might otherwise be had."

The well-bred Episcopalians had not fought for the best tables, because there were more than enough tables to go around. With them Eilley felt stiffly at her ease; but her profit was less than ever. The excursion of the Pioneers, which she captured after all, was just what a serious historical celebration should be, with a covered wagon out of which stared tow-headed children and smoky faced women in butternut jeans beside swinging camp kettles. Even a Dr. D. P. Brown was present, but there was no call upon his professional talents, that is, until at the end of the day when the train neared the

station, he himself jumped from the rear platform before the engine had stopped. The next day he discovered that he had four broken ribs, and some days later he unhappily died from the injury. Mrs. Bowers gave his face a hearty welcome to her gallery of spirits.

Through the early summer there were charges and counter-charges about the stock-market. Mr. Sutro declared that every one on Montgomery Street in San Francisco said Flood and O'Brien were dumping their holdings on the market to break it. At the end of August he brought her in dismal elation the news that the Bank of California had closed with liabilities of fourteen millions, and assets of only half that. "Ralston," he said, "has resigned. He owed the bank four millions and Sharon two millions. Then he valked straight to the North Beach, and in an hour they find his body vashed up on the sand."

For the moment it seemed to Eilley that now quite enough doom had come upon Mr. Sharon, since what appeared to be the utter crushing of her Comstock had all but flattened her too.

She misjudged Mr. Sharon's vitality and resourcefulness. Though the stock values had shrunk forty-two million dollars in one week, he, scarcely resting in his handsome San Francisco residence, placed rough tables in the parlors and held there conference after conference. Guiding, exhorting, threatening, he proposed a syndicate

to take the bank stock at a small valuation, restore its capital, and guarantee the depositors against loss. He subscribed a million dollars himself, and even Lucky Baldwin, the outsider, who had opposed the bank crowd, contributed a million too. As Francis G. Newlands, Sharon's son-in-law, said later of Ralston, "A wave of emotion swept the city, involving all classes and conditions of life. The forces of society which, had this unfortunate man lived, would have gathered themselves into a wave of indignation against him, in the face of that sad death gathered into a wave of destruction for his enemies, and finally sank into a deep and quiet swell of pity and sympathy securing oblivion to his faults and remembrance only of his virtues."

Taking over Ralston's great estate at Belmont and also the completion of the Palace Hotel, Sharon succeeded in bringing about the reopening of the bank early in October. In the brilliantly illuminated court of the hotel a thousand people gathered to celebrate with music, speeches and cheers. In his modest oration Sharon himself declared: "It has been a day of triumph, which belongs to no single-handed conqueror, over adverse circumstances. It is rather the property of every citizen who has been faithful and hopeful during the past thirty days of financial doubt and dismay. Yet, in the crowning hour of victory, in the presence of the grand witness of your skill in the mechanical arts in this glorious

temple of hospitality, amid all this flood of light and music, I experience a sense of almost overpowering sadness. I miss, as you do, the proud and manly spirit of him who devised this magnificent structure, and under whose direction and by whose tireless energy it has mainly been reared. I mourn, as you do, that he is not with us to enjoy this scene of beauty, and I offer here with you the incense of regret and affection to his memory. Peace be to his ashes!"

From the doom of Providence, even Eilley Orrum was forced to admit, though she could not comprehend how it had been done, Mr. Sharon had quickly resuscitated her beloved Comstock, which continued for that year to yield over forty million dollars. It was as if Gold Canyon had been moved bodily to San Francisco outside the limits of her spiritual world. Those limits she must extend as soon as she could concentrate her thoughts.

On October twenty-sixth, however, in the sad little Gold Hill cottage, where she had gone for a day and a night with an unappeasable longing for more memories of Sandy, even that pleasant wallowing in melancholy was quickly broken up. Suddenly she heard shouts in the street. "Fire! Fire! Fire! Virginia City!" Palpitating on the edge of the gay porch, she could see above the steep grade a tremendous pyramid of flame and smoke sweeping upward in the autumn wind below Mount Davidson. So swift and vivid was the great happening

that in after years she never could remember whether the great fire began at night or in the daylight.

"All Virginia!" women and children were crying to one another. Every man had dashed up the road.

"It was a coal-oil lamp," a refugee told them, "a coal-oil lamp in a lodging house that started it." The Comstock had become a volcano indeed.

"My God!" a neighbor shouted to Eilley, "them houses in Virginia 're paper, paper I say. The ceilings and the partitions, they're muslin covered with wall-paper!"

Even as she yelled from her porch across to Eilley, they were almost thrown from their feet by an explosion. "Powder! Virginia's full of powder!" a dozen screamed. While they screamed, detonation followed detonation as the flames in the gale reached the armories of the proud guards. For hours cartridges popped and powder magazines boomed while the fire raged through two thousand fallacious buildings.

"The miners!" Hardly could the women utter that word. Sutro had not yet completed his tunnel with its promised exit. Yet in the end they heard that the men had escaped. In the Consolidated Virginia especially, another refugee brought the good word, the time-keeper had called off the names of all the men as usual when they emerged from the mine. Guards with picks prevented them from running away or scattering before

the lists had been checked. After all had been hoisted, the iron doors at the top of the shaft were shut down, and a twelve-foot layer of sand was let in on top of them to prevent the fire from descending. By that time two thirds of the building above the last heroic workers had already been burned away. At the height of the new hope after the great bonanza panic, all work in the Consolidated Virginia and many other mines was stopped for over six weeks.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1

BY THAT visitation the populace, instead of being chastened though at first it was stunned, was shortly uplifted to the very pinnacle of civic unity. Desirable as a really permanent city would be, in accordance with Eilley's own ideals, yet she was exasperated at their philosophic brightness. They should have recognized the fire as a purification which had come because they had not adequately supported her resort and her powers as the Washoe Seeress. Instead, while they set up makeshift dwellings and places of trade, their mutual loving-kindness was almost hysterical. Even the Chinamen, with lanterns poking about in the burned district to salvage what they could, and buying old iron from boys who recovered twisted scraps from the cellars, were antlike in their rebuilding. Mrs. Bowers would bear with her Comstock as long as might be necessary. She would go among the people there once more and encourage them with fresh proofs of her superhuman insight. She

must quicken the activity at that northern end of the lode. The mortgage holders were becoming peremptory in their demands for payment, and she had no money. It was high time for that new claim of hers, which had lain fallow throughout the summer, to come to her rescue.

On the day before she set out, a Mr. Thomas Donnelly, section foreman of the V. and T. at Franktown a few miles away, who had often waved at her when he had passed the mansion, was burned to death in his cabin. An upright, steady young man worth about five thousand dollars which he kept under his bed, he had left Judge Owen's residence in Franktown early in the evening, speaking lightly of his intention to be at the ball of the Washoe City Freemasons the following Monday, and, after midnight, ice-men from Ophir discovered in the ruins of his shack his charred body with his skull fractured and clotted with blood. Buttons from his clothing were scattered on what had been the floor.

Eilley came to her own significant conclusions, and as soon as she arrived at Louisa's, she announced them to Mr. Lynch who had already foregathered there. "Mark my words," she said, "Mr. Donnelly was foully dealt with."

"Who is suspected," he inquired, "of the deed?"

"Chinamen," she declared, "and all Chinamen ought to be discharged at once and replaced with white men."

Thus firmly did she undertake the detection and punishment of crime, though she did not care to see with her own eyes her judgment carried out. As Mr. Lynch made little reply, she then softened and deepened her prophetic mood. No longer did she need a trance or her crystals to produce results. "A large body of ore," she said gently, "will ultimately be found in the mines north of Virginia City." That seemed reasonable in view of her previous predictions.

"What about the Wells-Fargo?" he asked as if he had stock in it.

"In the Wells-Fargo," she replied, "the hardest kind of rock will shortly be encountered, not in the main shaft but in one of the drifts. When they have passed through that, they will find water and then ore. Heavier machinery will be required for the proper development of the mine." That concluded her oracular utterance, for she had determined this time to be succinct in order that there might be no mistaking the force of her words.

"That should not elate the stockholders too much, ma'am," Mr. Lynch seemed skeptical, "for your prediction smacks of assessments as well as ore."

In the next few days two white men were arrested for the murder of Mr. Donnelly, and one of them had his watch. As the spring came, moreover, little ore was found in the Wells-Fargo, and none in the surrounding property. No one came forward to dig for Mrs. Bowers

the hole essential to her continued possession of her claim. The treasure there was as secure as bullion in the strongest vault. Then the mortgage holders insisted that the mansion should not be opened during the coming season. Though Eilley raged, they were obdurate. When they quietly completed the foreclosure of the property, she sat in her parlor and subdued her fury for she knew that she would never let her mansion go. Before any one could turn her out, her claim would have become a mine, and the mine would be indignantly erupting with silver worth millions. While her enemies, including the still unpunished Sharon, gnashed their teeth, she would live on as the most eminent personage Nevada had ever known. In the meantime it would be good to rest and devote herself to prophecy because, in her back, coals of fire sizzled ever and again upon ice.

The picnics of the various Sunday-schools, Guards, Knights, Miners and Pioneers disported themselves at Farmer Treadway's as if glad of the change. No matter! They would come back more appreciative. He could never succeed. When the provident Caledonians wrote to ask her special permission for their picnic on her grounds, she sent them a prompt and thrawn refusal. What had they, her own people, ever done for her? If she could have granted their request, she would not have admitted them to see her humbled. She was not humbled. Before her eyes the valleys and hills stretched

as boundless and as variegated as when she had first decided to use them for her own ends. She would use them for many indomitable years, but she would use the spirits more.

Her second sight retained the vitality of the ages. One incisive manifestation of it followed another, since wood-cutters, for a lark, would stop to see her when they had once a month a day off on which to get drunk. For a dollar she would sit before her crystal with her eyes open and tell them what to do and what to avoid. She would make the most of customers at hand in these tedious waiting days. One evening she warned a young carpenter that on the next day the scaffolding on the house which he was building would fall down and that he must stay at home. He remained at home and the scaffold fell. Then she told a bully with depraved eyes that if a murderer ever touched her peep-stone, it would break. She had to go out of the room to answer the door, and when she returned, she found her largest crystal split into half a dozen pieces, and her client gone. The spiritual world clamored in her cranium. Alone in the evening she would go out on the hillside and gather fagots to keep her fire alive.

The Comstock thrived as if it had never needed her to discover and maintain its prosperity. Louisa, with her usual nose for news, told her that Mr. Fair had bought the million-dollar residence of the Hon. Milton

S. Latham at Menlo Park in California, that Mr. O'Brien, the former saloon-keeper, had a house covered with gingerbread work in San Francisco and another in San Mateo, and that Mr. Flood, his partner, had built on top of San Francisco's most superb hill a mansion twenty times larger than that in which she, Mrs. Sandy Bowers, still so precariously resided. On one of the high streets in Virginia City Mr. Sharon and Mr. Mackay had new homes with beautiful terraced grounds, ponderous stone walls, and handsome stairs and landings. The big bonanza kings were trying to be grander than Eilley; but when her new claim struck the lead, she would quickly surpass them, though Mrs. Mackay was already spending much of the time in Paris.

At the end of the morning train from Reno to Virginia City as it passed the mansion she often saw a resplendent special car. From Mr. Lynch she would learn then that the Mr. Rothschild whom she had tried to see in London, Baron Rothschild it now appeared that he was, had arrived in the private car *Pennsylvania* in which President Lincoln had traveled to Washington for his inauguration. Or perhaps it was General Frémont who had revisited Nevada and been shown the howitzer which he had abandoned in the relentless mountains while Eilley had been in Nauvoo. One day Mrs. Pullman broke her transcontinental journey to investigate the city in the desert—in a palace car that

cost sixty thousand dollars and contained among other luxuries one of the new upright pianos. Through the mines President Grant himself and his party were taken—by Mr. Mackay and Mr. and Mrs. Fair. None of these illustrious people called on Eilley Orrum. Though with a twinge she heard of and sometimes saw their arrival and swift departure, she knew courageously that before long every such visitor must come to her, promised herself their future fealty as she often before Christmas had promised Persia oranges.

Then toward the end of 1876, while she waited for the ore in her claim to burst through the ground, the callous holders of the mortgage told Mrs. Bowers that they must take possession of the mansion by the New Year. Let them take possession! Eilley was too overwrought to do more than storm in her heart. She could at least remain on the estate, for they said she could live in the cottage at the north end of the property. In a month, perhaps in a week, some one would develop her claim and strike such overwhelming treasure that her victory would then be all the greater for her having been driven to the very edge of her grounds. She gave a bounteous little Christmas dinner for a handful of old friends, including Louisa who had lately been busy losing her husband, and within the week she moved. The what-nots and the knickknacks, the fine paintings and the furniture, even the bedroom set with the grapes, Mr.

Thompson kept to sell at some future date. Her flowers she would not leave to his carelessness. For a year they had pined under the impingements of her distracted love. On the afternoon when she moved to the cottage, she took them from the conservatory, pot by pot, to the granite hill behind the mansion and left them there to die in the night cold. Then with a can from the kitchen she proceeded to the ivy from Westminster Abbey. "There!" she splashed on the roots the boiling lye, and "There!" the sharp edges of her fury almost cut into the stone, and "There!" and "There!" She had promised her plants and vines that she would kill them if she ever had to go away.

2

Like the earlier ore the big bonanza might have to peter out in order that Nevada might be brought to its senses. If the Comstock declined again, Eilley Orrum would bring it back. If the rebuilt city should waste and disintegrate as an object lesson to those who would not try the spirits, she would construct it anew. At fifty she felt a wondrous new vigor and a spiritually refined creativeness without the old wrenching influences. The spirits came to her freely though with less poignant lucidity. Seventeen years she had waited for wealth and a child in the first place; she could wait seventeen more, if necessary, for her rehabilitation.

When in June 1877 there was a grand reopening of the Bowers mansion, with a fine bar and bathing-suits for the hot, cold, steam and plunge baths, under the management of C. H. Sproule & Co., proprietors, she could not bear to watch their failure through the trees from her toe-hold in the cottage. So all summer she moved restlessly from Washoe Valley to Reno, Carson City, Virginia City, or Gold Hill, and continued her predictions. Louisa, a few years younger than she, had been almost too occupied to see her. A Mr. Dettenreider had appeared on the horizon, and Louisa had blushed and allowed herself to be wooed and won. Mr. Sutro too was occupied, but even though he was immersed in the details of completing his tunnel at last, he always seemed glad to see her for a few moments in his office. Never one of her regular clients, yet he knew how such interviews should end, and if it was not a ten-dollar gold piece it was at least a five. It was in his office that she heard much of the news.

The bonanza kings, he said, were having trouble with their minority stockholders. A Mr. S. P. Dewey especially charged that the great men had unfairly manipulated the stock. In the first four months of 1877 all dividends had ceased, even while the production of silver was still at the rate of forty millions a year. Mr. Dewey stressed the fact that Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien, as chief stockholders in companies furnishing the water

supply, the wood-cutting and the milling, had received from this last in less than three years over five million dollars, half of which was profit. These things had long incensed Mr. Sutro, and Mrs. Bowers was only too delighted to carry on the good work of righteous anger.

"Dewey, he gets an Englishman named White," Mr. Sutro said, "to vote for another board of trustees, and then Mackay, he says, 'An Englishman can't know nothing about vorking an American mine. If they want to blow about the mine, why don't they come to Virginia City and try to run it themselves?' Mackay! But once he wanted all the English capital he could get!"

"How long, O Lord, holy and true," Eilley could hear an inner voice clearly questioning, "dost thou not judge and avenge?" The question with its immediate answer from the same source she helpfully communicated to Mr. Sutro: "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man."

Yet to avert, so far as it lay in her power, that desolation worse than anything the Comstock had experienced, she decided, in her renovation, that winter to go to Virginia City on a strictly professional visit. She must keep herself consistently in the public eye in order to be of the ultimate service. It had been foolish of her ever to adhere to the Scottish superstition that to use the gift of second sight for regular gain would be unlucky. Having cast aside superstition, she would depend with her

fresh vim on only what she knew to be true. To Mr. DeQuille she took for the paper a reading notice that sounded as much like a social note as she could make it:

“Mrs. Bowers, the seeress of Washoe Valley, who is at present stopping in this city and has consented to give sittings for the accommodation of her friends, is overwhelmed with visitors. She can be seen at the residence of Mrs. Dettenreider, South C Street.”

After that she rejoiced that she really was overwhelmed with visitors, four and five every afternoon, to whom she gave unequivocal demonstrations of her endowment.

“I have lost a valuable gold watch chain.” Cautious Mr. Whitney stroked his beard as he laid his problem before her, and she was glad to help save the Comstock by assisting him in this matter. “I have made a diligent but fruitless search for it,” he told her, “and I now believe a Chinaman formerly in my employ stole the chain.”

She closed her eyes and slightly inclined her head. In spite of her aversion for the Chinese, Mrs. Bowers must be honest. After a few moments of impressive silence she sat upright so suddenly as to startle the acquiescent old gentleman. “Your house is undergoing repairs, is it not?” she asked briskly, and on being assured by the gaping Mr. Whitney that it was, she said, “If you will look carefully in the pile of rubbish in one of your rooms, you will find the missing treasure.”

Without confidence in her prediction, as he said afterward, he did as she directed, and poking over the rubbish for a couple of hours, he was rewarded by finding the lost object. On every street corner, then, and in every saloon, Mr. Whitney declared his willingness to make affidavit to the facts as he related them. Thus many fair-minded persons were convinced that she was accurate and that no faith on a client's part was necessary. To one skeptical young married lady, however, Eilley said that half-way down in her trunk she would find something red, and though the lady went home and found in her trunk, which she had not opened for a year, a red album, she reported to her neighbors that above the trunk a window, which always had stuck, had been raised in her absence.

"I have no confederates," Mrs. Bowers stated with contempt to all who questioned her. A youth then circulated the story that she had planted two twenty-dollar gold pieces in a box intending to tell a gentleman he would find money there, but that before she could direct her client to the place, another man stole the gold pieces. "I have no twenty-dollar gold pieces," she withered the one who informed her of this story, "to squander on a gentleman who pays me but a dollar."

As the picnic season of 1878 began, every one was saying she had predicted that the Crown Point bridge would break down while the excursion train conveying

the school children to Farmer Treadway's was passing over it. To squelch that inhuman lie, for every one knew that any child was more to her than rubies, she went on the train and attended the picnic herself. She was glad, moreover, for once to patronize Farmer Treadway and thus to approve of the general distaste for the Bowers mansion now that she was no longer its hostess.

The stock of the Consolidated Virginia, which had risen to over 700 in the final month before the panic, had fallen to 8. As the ore in sight diminished, wives and children retreated to California where life would be more lenient away from the strain of the altitude. On the Comstock even the sale of liquor was falling off, so that keener competition than ever appeared in the advertisements. Thus Thomas Taylor and Company declared:

“Ex-Ship Dauntless. We have received from Jesse Moore & Co., Louisville, Ky., a shipment of P. Vollmer's Old Bourbon and Rye and Swan Old Bourbon Whiskies, which we offer to the trade here or from the warehouse in San Francisco at Lowest Figures. We draw the attention of the public to the fact that Liquors improve greatly by a Sea Voyage and that we ship all our Whiskies around Cape Horn. Also, agents for Cyrus Noble Old Bourbon, from the Cyrus Noble Distillery, Cincinnati, Ohio.”

Fine names all of them! Mrs. Bowers had read so many liquor advertisements in her eager search to comprehend

all the Comstock enjoyed that her throat seemed a bit parched in spite of herself at such a notice. The sea! If there was anything Nevada lacked, it was the sea and its improving moisture. Mrs. Bowers would go to California herself some time, but only for intervals of relaxation from her duties to the state which she still liked to think of as Washoe. In 1879 she read with a thrill of heartburn, and even Mr. Lynch confirmed the admission, that the Comstock had definitely lost the great bonanza lode. "But the lode is there," she would maintain to the end of her days.

She had taken a room in the house on West Street, Reno, where Persia had died, and every afternoon she would dress carefully and either pay or receive social calls. Throwing back her head and lifting her black eyes, above those cheeks that retained their high color, she persevered in her resolute calling as the Washoe Seeress while she waited for the next revival, this time utterly her own, on the Comstock. In her peep-stone she could see that revival like a silver star shining on a black splotch of disgrace for Mr. Sharon. Yet it was astonishing how rapidly the months and the years went by, all as lovely as clouds and as impalpable. Reno on the Truckee River, set in a bowl almost as comforting as Washoe Valley, was certainly more livable than Virginia City or Gold Hill. In Reno people had lilacs and plum blossoms in the spring, and roses that bloomed until

Thanksgiving amid the tang of the not too distant sagebrush after a dash of rain. From Mount Rose above the town stared all summer one snow bank like the all-seeing eye of the Saints. Fate's intention must be orderly, though the visible pattern might seem haphazard like that of the outcroppings on the mountains. Mrs. Bowers knew that she had the vision above the visual with which to know the infinite purpose.

As Virginia City went down and down and down, Eilley heard first that Mr. Thompson without bowels of mercy had sold the mansion to Theodore Winters, her former neighbor who with Mr. Sharon had seized her mine, and then that Mr. Winters, having no use for it as the resort had never paid, had given it to General R. M. Clarke, reserving for grazing purposes the field on the east side of the road. Soon tramps, people said, were sleeping in her bath-house and other outbuildings while the whole place stood in woebegone and filthy dilapidation. Later it shocked her again to hear that General Clarke had sold it to Philip V. Mighels, a writer, who did not try to live in it. Yet from hands to hands it must move only in the true circle of destiny back to her who had first dreamed of it that May Day in Connon.

Of the early Comstockers, Comstock himself, Old Pancake, had committed suicide in Montana, Alva Gould, who had sold one of the first claims which had afterward become the famous Gould and Curry, collected

fruit from ranchers around Reno and peddled it out of a wagon in the town, and Norcross of the Hale and Norcross was foreman of a planing mill in San Francisco. Mr. O'Brien had died a bachelor, leaving his money to nieces and nephews, and Mr. Flood, one of the great people in San Francisco, had died too, leaving fifteen millions. Even Mrs. Fair, née Theresa Rooney, had been among the casualties. The family of Senator Jones lived much of the time in Santa Monica, and now Mr. Mackay had been called by wider business interests to New York. Mrs. Bowers would outlive them all and never fade into obscurity. Nevada complained bitterly that if those who had gone away had only invested and spent their money in the state, great stable industries would have sprung up. Too many who should be Nevadans were lavishing the money that came from the Comstock on riotous living elsewhere. If Mr. Sharon had only built his Palace Hotel in Reno, or Mr. Mackay had only opened the main offices of his Postal Telegraph Company in Virginia City!

To San Francisco Eilley, at length, went for a few months, to take a room on a quiet street and put in the window a chaste sign: "The Washoe Seeress." Jim, Betsy and her brothers and sisters in Scotland had all died, and their children had nothing, though the ne'er-do-well Livingstone boys were always somewhere. One day a gentleman, seeing Eilley's sign, went in merely

curious to know what fate had in store for him. She looked at him closely, asking him where he lived, to which he gave an evasive answer.

"You are from Nevada," she said, "and a bond exists between us."

He was indeed from Nevada, but did not know what she meant by the bond for he did not know who she was.

"You will shortly change your employment," she said, and sure enough he found on his return that the company for which he worked had changed its plans in regard to his duties. The spirits were infallible. The gentleman, she knew, was a brother of her old friend, Mr. Hawkins, though she had not seen him since his childhood.

To Nevada she had to go, then, to see the Hawkins family in Genoa. "The gold which was stolen," she told them, glad to see her but puzzled as to what to do with her about the place, "is buried at the foot of a large pine tree." They were amazed, as she could not have known that any gold had been stolen, though such was the case. Though strict search was made for it, they did not find where it lay. "You are drifting away from the ore in your mine," she also warned Mr. Hawkins, and subsequent developments showed that to be true.

"The seers of old were great people," he justified her to every one as she started for California again; "God could never have carried out His scheme of salvation

without them, and why shouldn't there be just as great seers to-day?"

3

Leaning on the poor crutch of that encouragement, Eilley returned to San Francisco earlier than she had expected. The busy Hawkins family had seemed glad to have her leave their still active hot springs. Back in the confinement of her city room, she indulged in a rare depression. She counted and recounted the blunted, fugitive years since the loss of her mine and mansion. The blunted, crowding years ahead seemed more than she could bear. Life was tasteless. And the next day one of the most momentous afternoons of her whole experience fell plop into her life. Her regular customers had not heard of her early return, but her habit of dressing for the afternoon was well rewarded when a young lady, fair, beautiful, downcast, entered her room and was seated.

At the sight of a new client Eilley's spirits revived, but before she could give tongue to her interesting experiences in Genoa and otherwise make conversation, the visitor, revealing a pair of surprisingly sharp hard eyes, announced, "I am Mrs. Sharon," and waited for the effect.

The effect was instantaneous. Despite her long intimacy with ghosts, Mrs. Bowers almost toppled from

her rocking-chair. The creature then was no customer, she was a siren, and probably a harlot too. Eilley, though badly shaken, kept her dignity. "Mrs. Sharon," she said coldly, "is dead."

"I am the second Mrs. Sharon," said the siren complacently, "and I know that my dear husband's friends are my friends too." She cast a long sly glance at Eilley's startled face. The acute silence hovered between them, and the siren kept her peace.

Slowly Eilley gathered her wits. "Mr. Sharon was never anything to me," she said almost with regret. "So he married again? I hadn't heard of that?"

"Yes," said the siren reassuringly; "we have been united in holy matrimony these many months," and as Eilley continued to flounder in interested speculation, she plunged into the story of her life which evidently she had told many times before. "I was left an orphan with twenty thousand dollars in my own right; my father was a prominent attorney in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, but in my innocence my money was taken from me while I was in the convent. Then my uncle, who was fond of me, brought me to San Francisco where he provided me with a suite of rooms at the Palace Hotel. It was there in 1880," she paused, "that I met Senator Sharon."

"When," Eilley demanded, for quite apart from her second sight she knew dirt when she saw it, "did you

marry Mr. Sharon?" The Washoe Seeress was alert now, like a cat ready to spring with every whisker out and every nerve tuned.

"Senator Sharon," the lady admitted sadly, "took advantage of my innocence. He thought a lot of me," she seemed to blush, "he offered me a thousand dollars a month," she said with pride, "to be his mistress. That was in his office where I had gone to ask advice about some stocks. Of course I at once declined his offer in a businesslike manner, but I was not angry. I simply turned the conversation," she boasted, "toward the subject of marriage, and so Senator Sharon and I signed a marriage contract." Contract, thought Mrs. Bowers, thank God, I've a respectable certificate! There's nothing like the good old-fashioned marriage lines. "In the presence of Almighty God, on August 28, 1880," the wronged lady continued, "I took Senator William Sharon of Nevada to be my lawful and wedded husband, and now he won't have anything to do with me. He's cruel and hard and cold," the tears flowed down her painted face. "You, you can see into the future," the sobs increased, "look into your crystals and tell me what to do."

Surely the enemy of the house of Bowers was delivered into Eilley's hand. Toward Sandy, who of late had seemed so distant, her thoughts had been racing. "I must talk with Sandy about this," she kept repeating

in her mind to steady herself, "I must talk with Sandy, Sandy, with Sandy." Aloud she said, her voice trembling slightly, "I must talk—I must think this over. In the night I shall look into all my crystals. Come back to-morrow, come back to-morrow morning." Now Eilley's excitement was at fever heat. All she wanted was to be alone, though her heart had gone out to this lady in spite of the damage which it had so often sustained in the past from harlots.

"My own name," said the lady, "is Sarah Althea Hill. Mr. Sharon called me his rose."

With the departure of Sarah Althea, Mrs. Bowers tramped the floor from the window to the commode and back to the window, until at length with her fingers on the unpainted wash-bowl since that felt cool and solid, she rested, a little out of breath, as if she had climbed the highest mountain behind her mansion.

"Have the law on him," the familiar voice of Sandy had at last advised her, "have the law on him."

The next day she conveyed this advice to Sharon's rose.

"I shall sue for a divorce," the advice of the seeress seemed but to sanction her own previous resolve, "and to do so I shall of course need money. Look into your crystal and see if I shall get the money."

With a horror of divorce, for adulteresses, Mrs. Bowers who had been Mrs. Hunter and Mrs. Cowan,

yet could foresee the gorgeous finale of a smashing lawsuit against the adversary. Charges and innuendoes, a great sitting court with spectators, the newspapers, Sharon, as Sarah Althea said, the largest taxpayer in San Francisco, supplying the city with at least one fiftieth of its entire revenue—Eilley could hardly realize that destiny had led her into the very midst of this, and just when she was feeling so poorly too, but clearly it had.

“Where can you get the money?” she asked.

“I shall only need a loan,” said the rose, “for in the end the court will naturally award me my expenses. I have letters,” and she showed them to Eilley, “in which Mr. Sharon addressed me as ‘My dear wife.’ I shall have to borrow, reluctant as I have been to do so, from Mammy Pleasaunce.”

“Mammy—Plea-sants?”

“Yes, she—though a colored person—gave me the charm which worked upon Senator Sharon so that he married me. She knows that when I come into my estate, she will not be forgotten. And you too, dear Mrs. Bowers, will be suitably rewarded.”

With that she rose, leaving Eilley almost stifled, as if the room were filled with a thick, stupefying aroma from that rival sorceress, and yet with the mansion almost within her grasp again. She must not let her new client or her old quarry escape. As things developed, she, Sharon, the city, nor indeed the nation, could hardly

have escaped the untamable energy of Sarah Althea Hill. To the standard of her injured purity, with the aid of several thousand dollars from Mammy Pleasance, Sharon's rose soon had attracted the chivalrous zeal of Judge David S. Terry.

A great kind-faced gentleman like a deacon or a bull, Eilley found him, with belligerent chin-whiskers beneath a set mouth, broad nose and good eyes. "I was in Virginia City," he told her, but it had evidently been during the European travels of Mr. and Mrs. Bowers; "I took up a claim, but it was disputed by two Irishmen in behalf of a woman known as 'the sage hen,' and I had to defend it by building a high stone wall."

Eilley had often wondered about "Terry's wall" which still stood in the canyon. How could she know that this proper gentleman, a former chief justice of the California supreme court, had once plunged his bowie-knife into the carotid artery in the neck of a vigilante named S. A. Hopkins, or that later in a duel he had killed United States Senator Broderick?

On Sarah's behalf a Mr. Neilson demanded money from Mr. Sharon, and, being driven from the hotel, he had Mr. Sharon arrested the next day and held under bail of five thousand dollars for adultery. Then, while Judge Terry started the suit for divorce, Mr. Sharon countered by bringing another suit in the United States court to have the instrument, purporting to be a declara-

tion of marriage between him and Sarah Althea Hill, declared a forgery. In court one day Eilley, still abetting Sarah with all the spirits, heard the scurvy Sharon swear that on November 7, 1881, he had terminated his relations with Miss Hill, dismissed her and paid her off with a full settlement of three thousand dollars in cash and notes for forty-five hundred dollars, and that she had given him a receipt which she had later stolen. In the state court, however, the divorce was granted, together with the right for Sarah to use the name "Mrs. Sharon."

"I shall now make my *début* as 'Portia,'" she told Eilley, "playing six nights and lecturing Sundays, and I am having my whole case dramatized."

Disapproving of the stage as a profession for women as much as she did that of harlotry, Eilley encouraged her. She was in no mood to strain at gnats. When the intimation of this new undertaking of the rose appeared in the paper, which remarked that "if the plot is faithfully followed, it will put the indecencies of the French stage to blush," Sharon gave all of his fifteen million dollars by a deed of trust to his son, daughter, and son-in-law, Francis G. Newlands. A week later, to Eilley's exasperation, former Senator William Sharon of Nevada, king of the Comstock, died of angina pectoris, which had been aggravated by the scandal. Against the Washoe Seeress, the great tribal enemy of the Bowers family could not stand up to the end.

That, however, was far from the end of Sarah Althea. By now Eilley, deep in world affairs once more, considered her an indispensable friend. Shortly afterward the Federal court rendered its decree declaring the marriage contract "false, counterfeited, fabricated, forged, and fraudulent." Thereupon the rose of Sharon really went wild, and remained wild for some four years, in the early course of which her choleric champion, Judge Terry, veteran of the Texas rangers, legally took her to his bosom. Since she refused to obey the decree of the court that the contract be delivered to the clerk for him to write across it "cancelled," Sharon's son sought to compel obedience by a bill of revivor in the United States Circuit Court. Though Sarah and her new husband now lived in Stockton and moved about the state, Mrs. Bowers kept in touch with her and followed her movements.

While this latest suit was under advisement, every one including Eilley read that at Fresno the Terrys had entered the car in which Judge Sawyer, who had heard both cases, was returning from Los Angeles to San Francisco. From a seat behind the judge Sarah soon had her husband change to one directly in front of him, and in passing him she made insolent remarks, pulled the judge's hair with a vicious jerk, and said excitedly as she sat down beside her husband, "I'll give him a taste of what he'll get by and by. Let him render this decision if he dares."

"Shh, there are too many witnesses in this car," the irascible Terry tried to quiet her, adding, "The best thing to do with him would be to take him out into the bay and drown him."

Two weeks later Mrs. Bowers, greedy for the broil, sat in the very center of the room where the Circuit Court, with Justice Stephen J. Field of the United States Supreme Court, Judge Sawyer, and Judge Sabin from Nevada all sharing the bench, handed down its opinion. Within the bar in front of the judges were the Terrys.

While the delivery of the opinion continued, Sarah suddenly rose and demanded, "Are you going to make me give up my marriage contract?"

"Be seated, madam," said Justice Field.

Repeating her question, she was again told to be seated. Then her tongue was truly unloosed. "You've been bought!" she shouted at Justice Field. "What price did you get? You got Newlands' money. Everybody knows you got Newlands' money!"

Eilley clutched the arms of her chair.

"Remove the lady," the justice ordered.

"I'll not go," yelled Sarah, "no one shall take me!"

The marshal seized her arm.

"No man living shall touch my wife!" cried old Terry, jumping to his feet, and hitting the marshal so violently in the mouth as to knock out a tooth.

While he tore open his coat and thrust his hand under his vest, others forced him down to his back. Allowed to rise while Sarah was removed, he finally drew his bowie-knife which was wrenched from him only after a severe struggle. In the anteroom, meanwhile, Sarah's small satchel was found to contain a revolver. As soon as order could be restored, Justice Field sentenced them both to the Alameda County jail for contempt, Sarah for one month and Terry for six. By this time the Washoe Seeress, quite lost in the *mêlée*, was about ready to repudiate for ever her most notorious client.

On the way to Alameda, Terry threatened to horse-whip Justice Field, and Sarah declared that she would kill both Justice Field and Judge Sawyer. Before Justice Field's next visit to California to attend to his circuit duties, so filled were the newspapers with conjectures about a probable attack on him by Terry that the Attorney-General of the United States authorized a deputy marshal to guard him, and one David Neagle was appointed. Justice Field was then a bald-headed, gray-bearded gentleman of almost seventy, about half the size of the ferocious Terry.

On the way from Los Angeles to San Francisco, when Neagle found that early in the morning the Terrys had boarded the same sleeping-car, he had the conductor telegraph ahead to Lathrop for police protection, which, however, proved unavailable. At Lathrop then Justice

Field, against Neagle's remonstrances, went with him into the station eating-house for breakfast. While they were eating, the Terrys entered, and, recognizing the justice, Sarah hurried out. Passing behind Justice Field and Neagle, Terry sat down at another table, but soon rose, went over to Justice Field, who had not seen him, and from behind struck him on each side of the face.

Springing up, revolver in hand, Neagle shouted, "Stop! Stop! I'm an officer!" At that Terry thrust his arm into his bosom as if to draw his bowie-knife, and Neagle fired two shots and killed him.

Sarah Althea, returning with her satchel, threw herself screaming and moaning upon the body. "Avenge me! Who will avenge me?" she shrieked to the waiters and other spectators. "He wasn't armed! Look for yourselves! You'll find no weapon!" While she thus screeched and wailed and clung to her dead husband's breast, they opened her satchel and found in it her trusty revolver.

It was obvious to even Eilley Orrum that destiny had run somewhat amuck. Yet she could not help feeling that such a tragedy was the deserved end of one who had gone so far beyond what any of her benevolent spiritual friends could possibly have advised. With the inevitable fading out of Sharon's rose, Eilley's mansion too seemed to be receding into the mists.

4

In Nevada the years like tumbleweed went to seed and were whirled away by the wind on the desert. In a trice Eilley awoke one morning in Reno and realized that she was sixty, and yet the Comstock had not come back. Well, ahead of her lay at least thirty more good years, plenty of time in which to become the Grand Old Lady of the Comstock, enjoying her second wealth and revered for her second sight which would always set her apart from the common folk with their desultory lives so full of fear. In 1889 during her Reno sojourn she affiliated with Adah Chapter, O. E. S., for Sandy had been a Mason and it was due his memory that the eclat of membership in that sisterhood should accrue to her, his loyal but not sorrowing widow.

Jim Fair, who had succeeded Sharon in the Senate after an expensive fight against Adolph Sutro, whom Eilley no longer saw, had died, and his estate too had been sued by a Mrs. Nettie R. Craven who claimed that he had married her. Already Eilley Orrum had outlived all of the bonanza kings except John Mackay. People were kind to her, some of her Comstock customers either in Reno or in San Francisco, wherever she might be, bringing her bottles of wine or even of especially fine old rye whisky. Scraps of saloon advertisements in the *Enterprise* floated in her mind—"excellent beverages

which have rendered his place so famous among those who find it necessary to take something of a stimulating nature occasionally." Her days were busy, for sometimes she gave as many as two or three sittings in an afternoon. Between them it did seem occasionally necessary, or at least pleasant, to take something of a stimulating nature. People modulated their voices to such low tones in these days that it was often rather a strain to listen to them. Another little drink might help relieve the strain. Yet the bigger Bowers bonanza on the Comstock delayed and delayed.

The seventeen years of waiting for it passed and still it did not appear, nor did any one come to insist on her return to the mansion. Some one would come. A young Mr. Bryan was running for President, and he was going to do great things about silver when he was elected. Eilley had not paid much attention to Presidents. In Nauvoo when she had first come to America, Elder Hyde had once said that a Mr. Tyler was President, and now a gentleman told her there had been a dozen or more others since then, but that this Mr. Bryan would be the greatest of them all. Unfortunately young Mr. Bryan was not elected, but before she knew it, after only a few bottles of that good rye whisky, it seemed he was running again, so another gentleman told her through the ear trumpet which it had seemed expedient to get now that people were lowering their voices beyond all reason.

And Mr. Sutro was Mayor of San Francisco. Eilley had written him a letter, but he had not yet answered

She still had thirty good years ahead of her, for she had decided that she could easily live to be over a hundred when once she got back to her mansion. In San Francisco her nephew was now paying ten dollars, sometimes twenty dollars, a month to supplement what she made from prophesying. Then in 1901, after Mr. Bryan had again been defeated and the gentleman who had been reelected had been shot, it seemed that Eilley would be more comfortable in the Home of the King's Daughters. Her dues to the Eastern Star had been kept up regularly, though it had been discovered that she had never signed the by-laws and her name had been kindly placed on the book by the secretary upon motion made and carried.

As she entered the Home, she was a little disappointed inside the doorway that that was the way kings' daughters lived. Yet, "Blessed are the meek," she reminded herself, "for they shall inherit the earth," or at least that part of the earth which was very dear to her. Though she was not entirely happy in this hospitable refuge where her freedom seemed curtailed, she retained a cheerful dignity and continued to smile, for was she not a daughter, *the* daughter of kings? To the other elderly daughters of kings she explained quite clearly that she would be there but a short time, until

her mansion in Washoe Valley had been reopened and refurnished in preparation for her return. "It has sixty rooms," she told them, "and hot baths outside all the year round." Naturally she at once assumed the leadership of these other elderly daughters, impressing them irrevocably for the short remainder of their lives. For them it was indeed pleasant to be in direct touch with anything so international as the Comstock.

In her trunk she cherished many treasures—the red and gold overdrape from half of one of her windows, Sandy's smoking set with an ingenious cover in the form of a dog's head, some post-cards sent her by an old Gold Hill friend from a World's Exposition with electric lights that had been held in Chicago, a photograph of Bishop Hunter in his later years that another friend had purchased as a curiosity in Salt Lake City, the neck-piece from one of her favorite dresses, and the spoons which the Jewish gentleman had so unjustly said were plated. On any afternoon she was glad to take these out and show them to the other ladies, fingering them with no mere reminiscent sense but with renewed certainty of their present elegance. A few of these ladies also had treasures, but none so fine as hers. "The Comstock will soon revive," she prophesied to them all; "in the near future I look for the largest mill in the world to be built there. You can see for yourself how lifelike the carving is on this dog's head. When I reopen my mansion—it has

eighty rooms—I shall give a small reception, not more than five hundred guests.” The other daughters eagerly supported her in her expectations.

Every morning she watched for the postman to come up the steps, because he might bring, any day, a letter requiring her immediate return to Nevada. Now that sciatica bothered her a little, it was agreeable to sit near the window and observe other people walk by. There was one gentleman with a limp who wore in the button-hole of his Prince Albert a different flower each day and who looked as Sandy might have looked by now, if she could only have induced him to wear a boutonnière. At any moment one of these people might turn, ascend the steps, ring the door bell and inquire for her. Hour by hour she expected a gentleman with the message that the lode had been found on her claim of fifteen hundred feet to the north of Virginia City, which had now almost reached the end foretold in the Good Book—“wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man.”

5

In the summer of 1903 the gentleman came. Though the lode had not been found, he, Mr. Henry Riter, had bought the Bowers mansion and intended to reestablish it as a resort. Eilley could feel the envy of the other ladies as she sat in the parlor of the Home talking with

him and listening to his friendly voice through her ear trumpet. Though she was seventy-six years old and the last twenty-five years had passed as a watch in the night, she felt almost the vigor and lightness of that May Day on the Cannon Moor. "I will fit up the two rooms over the north parlor," Mr. Riter said, "and you can tell fortunes in them to the visitors." Eilley was going back to her mansion, to her Washoe Valley! The broom, this gentleman declared, had grown higher than his head, and the goldfish fairly overran the pool. "You can be happy and contented there," he said, "in the home which gave you so much pleasure in the years gone by, and you can use your gift of second sight."

"My mansion is now being reopened," she told the other ladies who were all in a tremendous flutter as soon as he was gone; "it may take several months to furnish it as I wish, but the gentleman who was just here will let me know when it is ready."

The spirits like meteors rained upon her head. When her nephew came to see her, she went into a trance such as she had not experienced since the day when she sang the Catholic hymn in Latin. "Get an iron bar," she commanded him when she came out of that condition, "and probe with it in the ground in the orchard. You will find a large horse-bucket of gold nuggets cached there." While she waited to hear from Mr. Riter who was executing his plans, her nephew went to Nevada and

did as she instructed him, but evidently he did not probe in the right places.

6

It was almost winter when Eilley Orrum returned to her mansion in Washoe Valley, attended by a committee consisting of Mrs. Clara Jamison and Mrs. Mary E. Stewart, appointed in her honor by Adah Chapter, O. E. S. Mrs. Webster was on the committee also but was unable to meet the train. Faithful Louisa Ellis, alas, could not greet her, having gone to her reward some time before. A former governor of Nevada, Jewett Adams, not a mining gentleman but a great rancher with cattle upon a thousand sage-brush hills and in a thousand valleys, accompanied the party. On November 15, 1903, Eilley Orrum went back to her home beneath the granite buttress of the Sierras, to Sandy, to John, to Theresa, and even to the puzzling Persia. Because she had died and been cremated in October, it was as an urn of ashes, and a spirit, that she went back to her mansion.

EPILOGUE

AND now I have revealed to you the true story of Eilley Orrum. If you should visit Nevada, you will find her but a small, insistent legend, though for some time it was of Sandy Bowers, such is the perverseness of male domination, and his mansion with the silver door-knobs that people spoke. His mansion! Eilley Orrum well knew that any man was but a poor means to various desirable ends, a means far less respectable than a mountain, a valley or a canyon. In any right arrangement of life men, she was sure, needed to be used, directed, and subjugated, just as one's environment had to be brought under decent and satisfying control. How much harder it was truly to be at one with a man, before he had become a phantom, than to be at one with the tantalizing multifarious creases of the earth's surface! The design of destiny is so infinite that only the ages can show the place of a spirited lady and her refining activities in the subtle and real pattern.

If you should go to the Bowers mansion over the wide

and excellent concrete road that now runs past its gate, you will find that it has continued in a simple unobtrusive way the honest career as a resort which Eilley began. The management advertises "Open Air Bathing in which soda proves helpful to the skin." On a summer evening, perhaps with your fiancé, or perhaps merely with some temporary gentleman who lightens the boredom of your term in the state, you may drive there in your roadster to swim in the hot or cold baths, near the dancing college boys and their girls.

On one occasion a gentleman who had married a daughter of Bishop Hunter visited the mansion and musingly told Mr. Riter that his famous father-in-law had been much attached to Mrs. Bowers (little could he know *how* attached they were!) and talked frequently in his old age of her and her fortunes after the separation.

Of course Eilley's treasures have been scattered. One person has her bedroom set with the grapes, and another the throne chair with the posts of fleur-de-lys. But she lives on even in this, for the broom in a semicircle around the front of the mansion still testifies to her spiritual presence. On the granite ledge behind the mansion there are as yet no pillars to mark the graves. Perhaps Eilley finds her greatest immortality in the untiring goldfish which have fulfilled the divine command to be fruitful and multiply with a vigor which she, alas, could never achieve. Yet even with them there is some doubt

as to whether they have maintained the eugenic purity that she would consider necessary in a royal line.

Though development work in the mines has continued until recently, the Comstock lode has never come back. How could it with the old lady but a handful of ashes in a marble urn? In September 1922 one of the largest mills in the world was erected at American Flat to work two thousand tons of ore a day for a minimum of twelve years. She predicted that. The aim of those financing this project was to extract the values of stope fills of tremendous size and low grade ore left standing in the mines by the profligate operators of long ago. In four years something over seven million dollars was thus recovered, the valuable metals being in the ratio of one of gold to forty of silver. It was objected when this mill was built that the plant was too permanent and not susceptible of ready alteration, but it was replied that the mill was planned for a campaign of twelve years at least and that there was probability of greatly exceeding this. Yet within five years this huge mill of permanent steel and concrete was dismantled and the newly created company town of Comstock was left desolate and without inhabitant. All that is left of the original Bowers mine, which did indeed produce a million dollars a year in the early 'sixties, is a great glory hole like a rock quarry, smeared here and there with the yellow porphyry in which Eilley had such great faith.

The Comstock silver lode presented a burnished luster to the good Irish names of Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien; the more striking Scottish name of Eilley Orrum has remained too long obscure. Far more than any of the Big Four, Eilley Orrum typified the great bonanza. With her righteous Scottish superiority she knew that, after planning and waiting for a good part of her life, she precipitated the discovery of the mines that disgorged enough silver to finance the Civil War. Living vividly in a future that was ever around the corner, she experienced a curiously combative happiness in the firm knowledge that she was the fitting pivot around which the glamour of her time revolved, though unsteadily and even outrageously without quite duly recognizing her as its very center. What a qualified, though often agitated, Victorian she would have been in a palace on Fifth Avenue! With what sureness of her own worth she in her calm eighties would have sat at the right of the guest of honor when her first-born son gave at his Long Island estate a consummate dinner for a prince, an aviator, or a king! Alas, it was the Irish who went on from glory to glory while she remained almost satisfied but always expectant among the friendly mountains that she craved. Eilley Orrum had a nice conviction of her own import which she enjoyed with confident tenacity to the very end. And yet when her story is told, the main question remains unanswered. What was there in her early ex-

perience to keep her bound in her chrysalis through the prairies of Illinois, over the Rocky Mountains, and amid the dead desert of the Great Salt Lake, but to slip that chrysalis and emerge into the private glory of a rare appreciation for the elusive virtue that is Nevada?

THE END

